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Kate Green



Grace's Visit.

A TALE FOR THE YOUNG.

I ask thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes ;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

* * * *

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate ;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

A. L. WARING.

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GRACE'S VISIT.

CHAPTER I.

“So doth many a sin-stained creature
Catch a glory from Christ's face ;
And a light is on his feature
That our eyes should love to trace.”

It was an August evening, calm and mild. The sun was gently sinking to his rest, and over the cloudless skies a holy peace was spreading, which, in the fullness of its repose, seemed to give an earnest of better things. Stillness had settled upon the village ; the heat of the day was passed ; the children had finished their lessons and their play, and had gone home to bed ; the reapers too had

left the fields, and were resting after their labors; and the women, having prepared their husbands' suppers, were now enjoying a short respite from household cares.

A carriage was slowly ascending the steep village hill, and as the roll of the wheels was heard, many curious faces peered forth from diamond-paned windows, to watch the vehicle as it passed on its way. "The general's carriage," passed from mouth to mouth; and with this explanation curiosity ceased, for "the general," otherwise General Courtenay, was well known in Aberford. He was indeed the owner of great part of the village, and inhabited its principal mansion, generally called by the poorer people, "The House."

The carriage passed out of sight of the cottages, and then entered a spacious park, where it soon disappeared among

the oaks and elms which studded the grassy slopes.

Meanwhile Julia Courtenay, the general's young granddaughter, was leaning from an open window in the school-room, and eagerly looking out.

"Do you think they will soon be here, Miss Loveitt?" she asked.

Miss Loveitt, her governess, a somewhat staid-looking middle-aged person, did not raise her eyes from her work.

"I cannot tell, my dear," she replied; "but I think you are sadly wasting your time in looking out of the window so continually; and all the looking in the world would not bring them any the sooner, you know."

"Of course I know that," said Julia rather pertly; "but if I choose to look out, I suppose I may;" and she continued to stand by the window.

Julia was a remarkably pretty girl of

about fourteen years of age. Her countenance was, however, somewhat marred by a look of self-consciousness which betokened that self was seldom absent from her thoughts. But Julia had been spoiled and flattered from her infancy, and her nature was not one which could thrive under such dealing as this.

Besides Julia and Miss Loveitt, there was another person in the room—a little delicate-looking girl, who lay upon a sofa, propped up by pillows, with a pair of crutches at her side. Rose Courtenay was only a year her sister's junior, but her form was bent and wasted by disease. About a year and a half before the time when our story commences, she had been seized with a species of hip complaint, which had grown gradually worse and worse, until at length she had become almost entirely confined to the sofa. The best medical advice had been

procured, but all was of no avail. The doctors shook their heads as they noticed her little face and hands grow paler and thinner, and her breath more feeble, each successive month. It was as if she were gradually wasting away, and no remedies seemed to have any power to arrest the premature decline.

The mother of Rose and Julia was dead; their father had the command of a regiment in India, and his children had for many years lived entirely with their grandpa. The greater number of these years had been spent on the Continent, for the eldest girl was very delicate, and a genial climate was necessary to her health. But at the early age of nineteen she had died, and General Courtenay had brought her home to be buried in the family vault at Aberford. His other grandchildren had accompanied him, and from this time they had remained in

England. A month only had elapsed since their return, when Rose had fallen ill.

Poor little Rose, there was an almost painful look of thought upon her brow, as though in her lonely hours of sickness she had reflected more than she ought upon subjects too deep for her, at an age when most children meditate upon nothing more profound than their easy lessons and play. From such children Rose was very different; she looked as if she were far away from joys like theirs, far away from the sunshine, the birds, the flowers, and from all such cheerful things as these. She looked very weary, and seemed longing for quiet repose.

"Miss Loveitt," said Julia again, "don't you think it is very strange that, although Grace is our only cousin, we should none of us have seen her?"

"Not strange, my dear, considering

the circumstances. You know you have been abroad so many years, and since your return home very much has happened to postpone her coming here: what with Rose's delicacy, and one thing or another, I don't see how she could have come before."

"No, we have been always waiting for Rose to get better, but she never does; why don't you, Rose?" said Julia, turning for an instant towards the sofa, and then running on thoughtlessly to remark, "It was just the same with poor Louisa. We were always expecting *her* to get better; and then she often did seem as if she were really recovering; but Rose— Oh, Miss Loveitt, the carriage, the carriage!" Julia started up as the sound of wheels became audible, and rushed out of the room; while Miss Loveitt rose more slowly, and putting by her work, asked Rose if she were

comfortable, or would like to go to bed. She then followed her pupil, closing the door behind her.

No one had observed the sick child turn her face from the light when Julia so flippantly mentioned their lost sister; but as, on Miss Loveitt's leaving the room, she now looked round again, her large deep eyes were filled with tears, and her lip was quivering. She had been Louisa's especial pet, and had loved her better than any of the rest; her wounded heart was not yet healed, and could ill bear a careless touch.

The sunset rays streamed in at the school-room windows, and there was a soothing kind of loveliness in the evening sky. Rose's yearning gaze found in it something like repose.

"It looks very peaceful out there," she said to herself; "but then it is not real. It appears to me that no peace is

real, for no peace ever lasts. Louisa seemed to be getting better, as Julia said just now ; and when we thought she was nearly well, and that we should all be so happy together, she again grew worse, and then she died. Every thing dies. Every thing that is good and pretty and happy dies ; and I must die, I know, and perhaps very soon ; I shall never, never be well again. Oh, why must every thing die ?”

“Why must every thing die ?” It is an old, old question ; one that has puzzled many a head wiser than that of Rose ; one that has been asked by many a desolate sufferer, looking up to heaven with streaming eyes and a dreary aching heart ; one that has tried the faith of many a trembling soul since first the fiat was fulfilled, and Abel lay cold and still in the eastern field.

But a time is coming---is close at hand.

when that question shall be asked no more. Never, in the heavenly country, shall the voice of wailing call after those who can neither hear nor answer; never shall disease or pain invade the new spiritual body; for, blessed be God, he hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light.

Julia had left the school-room for about a quarter of an hour, when her step and voice were once more heard outside the door, and with them was another step with which Rose was not familiar.

"She spends most of her time on the sofa now," Julia was saying, and Rose was perfectly aware that the words referred to herself. The next moment the door opened, and Julia entered, accompanied by a young girl.

"Here is Grace," said Julia, "come at last. Are you not glad to see her?"

"Yes," replied Rose, though rather

doubtfully, and looking earnestly up as she spoke into the new cousin's face. Grace bent down gently, and kissed the pale thin cheek, saying, as she did so, "I am sure I am very glad to see you too, and I hope we shall be very happy together."

"Of course we shall," exclaimed Julia, "we have been looking forward so long to your coming; and I am so glad it is the summer time; we can go out together, and boat and ride. But are you not tired now? You had better come and take off your things; tea is waiting for you down stairs."

"Has not your mamma come with you?" kindly asked Rose of Grace. Julia answered for her.

"No; is it not unfortunate? Just when aunt Mary was on the point of starting for Aberford this morning, she received a letter to summon her to Paris.

She has a sister there, who has been taken ill, so she was obliged to go there at once, and to send Grace here with the old coachman as an escort."

"You must be sorry," said Rose to her cousin; and as she spoke she noticed in the twilight that Grace's eyes were bright with tears. "I am sorry," she replied in a rather unsteady voice; and then no more was said upon the subject. Julia hurried her cousin away, only allowing her time to bid good-night to Rose, and the child was left alone again in the now fast-darkening room.

But Rose did not notice the darkness, for a ray of sunshine had gleamed forth upon her heart. Her new cousin's sweet smile, her gentle tone and kiss appeared still present to her mind.

Grace's age and height were almost the same as those of her cousin Julia. She was a slight and rather delicate-

looking girl, and with well-formed features. She, like Julia, had been from infancy accustomed to hear herself admired ; but unlike Julia, she was humble in spirit, and knew the danger of flattery. She had been taught the *true* value of beauty by her mother, who, left a widow at an early age, had brought up this her only child with the utmost tenderness and care, praying earnestly that the Lord would teach her how best to lead her infant mind to him. And so Grace was not vain, but knew of what little importance beauty in itself is ; how soon it passes never to return, and how slight a thing may mar it. The beauty that Grace desired to attain was the hidden beauty of the heart—the beauty we find in Him who is “altogether lovely,” and “fairer than the children of men.”

Something of this hidden and spiritual beauty shone out in Grace's face ; and it

was this expression, far more than regularity of feature, which rendered her countenance attractive. It was this expression, beaming love and truth, which so struck little Rose, which cheered her tender heart, and soothed her into a gentle sleep.

We sometimes meet faces which, as is commonly said, "it does one good to look at." Such faces are rare, but they might be less so if we could but live nearer to Christ, and realize more of the blessed Spirit's influence. Thus the heart would be filled with love, and oftentimes touched with tender feelings for the infirmities of others.



CHAPTER II.

“Thou can’st not to thy place by accident ;
It is the very place God meant for thee.”

TRENCH.

“Oft doth the Christian’s heart inquire,
‘What doth my God of me desire ?
What service, holy, pure, and high,
Can he receive from such as I ?’
Like Christ, in all things we must prove,
His life our model, and his love
The only pure unfailing spring
Of holiness in every thing,
The only law by which we e’er
Can do our Father’s business here.”

MONSEL.

GRACE was not long in divesting herself of her travelling dress, and this done, she descended with Julia to the drawing-room. The candles were lighted, and the curtains drawn, and Miss Loveitt was making tea at the small table upon which the urn was placed. General Courtenay, an elderly white-haired gentleman, was reclining in an arm-chair, and two boys

who had not been present when Grace first arrived, rose as she entered, to greet her.

Julia, who was always ready to take the principal part, stepped forward, and introduced her brothers.

"This is Hector," she said, directing her attention to a tall boy of about seventeen years of age; "and this," pointing to a merry-faced lad two years younger, "is Alfred: I dare say you have heard of them before."

"Come here, and sit by me, my dear," said General Courtenay; "I want to look at you." And as Grace seated herself upon a low chair beside him, he added, with a deep-drawn sigh: "Ah, you are very like, very like."

She knew he alluded to the strong resemblance which, as she had always heard, she bore to her father.

The general relapsed into a reverie,

recalling days long gone by, which the sight of her, the orphan daughter of his son, had recalled vividly to his recollection. Grace sat quietly in the corner near him, observing all that was passing in the room.

Alfred was lying full-length on a sofa, laughing and joking for the amusement of his sister and Miss Loveitt, and every now and then casting a sly look at Hector, who was evidently buried in a book. After a while, in obedience to a sign from Julia, he rose from his lounging position, stole up behind Hector, and, watching his opportunity, suddenly snatched the book out of his hand.

Hector started up in a violent passion. "Now, Alfred, what are you about? Give that to me directly."

"Ah, I dare say," cried Alfred provokingly, dancing up and down in front

of his brother, and keeping the book behind him.

“You wont? You shall though, or—”

Hector made a dart at the culprit, vainly endeavoring to secure the book.

Julia cried out, half in earnest, half in jest, “Oh, grandpapa, do speak to Hector; he’s going to hurt Alfred.”

The general opened his eyes, looked up, and his face was instantly clouded.

“I will have no more of this, sir,” he said in a stern voice, to Hector; “if you cannot behave like a gentleman, you had better leave the room. I wonder you are not ashamed to exhibit your temper in this way, and in your cousin’s presence too.”

“But, grandfather—”

“Be silent, sir, and sit down.”

Hector scowled, and moved towards the door.

"Where are you going?" asked the general.

"You said I had better leave the room."

"That's temper again. I said you had better leave it, if you could not behave like a gentleman. Sit down now as I told you."

Hector obeyed, but his brow looked very dark. Alfred returned him the book, which he opened, and commenced to read again, leaning his head upon his hand; but his mind seemed otherwise occupied. Grace felt very sorry for him. She saw that his temper was very hot, and easily provoked; and she saw also that he was not much of a favorite with either his brother or sister. When Miss Loveitt announced that tea was ready, he declined to have any, and was again chafed by Julia in an undertone, on account of his "sulkiness." He bit his lip,

but made no reply, and Grace longed to say something soothing.

For this, however, she had no opportunity, as Miss Loveitt, shortly after tea, desired Julia to go to bed; and General Courtenay, remarking that Grace looked very tired, advised her to retire also, which she accordingly did.

The two girls were to share the same sleeping apartment, and a pretty little dressing-room adjoining it was allotted to Grace's special use. Julia seemed to ignore any idea of her cousin's fatigue, and accordingly kept her from sleep by an incessant chatter.

"Is not Hector a disagreeable boy?" she said. "He is so passionate and sulky, that neither Alfred nor I like to be with him. I really am quite sorry that he is leaving school. I shall never be free from him now, until he goes to college, which he will not do for a whole

year. In the meantime he is to read with the clergyman of the village."

"I wish I had a brother," said Grace. "You are very fortunate, Julia, to have two, and a sister besides."

"I am sure you would not envy me, if you had a brother like Hector: he is so bad-tempered."

"I suppose gentleness is the only way to draw his love then," said Grace, in as sympathizing a tone as she could.

"I never thought about drawing his love," replied Julia rather pettishly; "I only know he is very disagreeable. How do you like Miss Loveitt?"

"I have seen too little of her to be able to say as yet," answered Grace. "Do you work very hard with her?"

"Yes, very; but she is going away next week. She has been a governess a long time, and now she means to leave off teaching, and live at home with her

mother. My summer holidays this year are postponed until she goes; then I shall have six weeks. Grandpapa has not heard of another governess yet."

"You must be sorry to lose Miss Loveitt," said Grace.

"Rather; but I like a change. We have had her so long. Alfred returns to school next week too, so you will see very little of him."

"I am ready to say my prayers now," Grace remarked, "so perhaps we had better talk no more to-night."

Julia seemed little inclined to agree to this proposal; but just at that moment there came a knock at the door, and Miss Loveitt's voice was heard.

"Julia, you must stop talking at once. I am sure your cousin is very tired, and you must let her go to sleep. In the morning, I shall ask whether you have obeyed me."

Grace thought that Miss Loveitt spoke in a somewhat peremptory manner. She did not know how difficult it was to induce Julia to obey.

The candle was extinguished, and the room was still. The brain of each young girl was busy with its own peculiar thoughts. Had those of Julia framed themselves into words, they would have run much as follows :

“I did not know that Grace was so pretty. I wonder whether she surpasses me? I must ask Totty Barnes ; she is a good judge. I hope not ; it is so pleasant to be admired, and I do n't like any one to be admired before me. I wonder if Grace noticed the difference between me and Rose. Totty Barnes says that when I am beside her, no one would look at her for a moment, even if she were well. I wish the dressmaker had finished my new frock. I should

have liked to put it on to-morrow, for Grace to see. I will ask her to show me her dresses; the one she wore to-night was not near so pretty as mine.

“I am very glad Grace has come; it will be so nice to have her for a companion, and when Miss Loveitt has gone, we can have plenty of fun together. I will take her to see Totty Barnes. Only five more days, and then the holidays. I hope grandpapa will not hear of another governess just yet. How glad I shall be when my lesson days are all over, and I can do as I like. I wonder if Grace has been to many parties. I should like to see how she dances. Perhaps we may go to a party while she is here. I hope so.”

And then Julia fell asleep, to dream of finery, balls, and gayeties.

Grace's thoughts, meanwhile, were flowing in a somewhat different channel.

“How strange it seems,” she said to herself, “to lie down without wishing mamma good-night. I can almost fancy that I am in my own little bed, and that the door is open, as usual, between my room and hers. It is hard, very hard, to part from her; but I know it is the Lord’s will, and I must try and submit quite patiently, and bend my will to his. He is near me still; Oh yes, I feel that he is near. He is near my bed to-night, and I am beneath the shadow of his wing. And so too is dear mamma. What comfort in that thought.

“Well, now I must consider it is he who sends me here, and so he must have some work for me to do in this place. I will pray to him to teach me what it is, and how best to fulfil it. Perhaps I may be able to help Julia a little; to help her to look up to Jesus, and to feel that she has ‘a charge to keep’ for him. And

then I wish I could do something for Hector; he looks unhappy, and the others do not seem to love him. Is there nothing in which I can help him, I wonder? Alfred is going away, and so is Miss Loveitt; but Oh, how pleasant it would be to try and comfort Rose. I long most of all to be a blessing to her; there is something about her so engaging, and she is so ill, and looks so weary, as if she were worn out too early. I almost love her already; and how sorry I am for her, lying all alone on that sofa. Oh, there is plenty for me to do, if I can but have grace to do it; only I am so very weak, and so far from what I ought to be. Am I fit to take it upon me to help others? But I am forgetting Jesus. After all, I am merely his instrument, as dear mamma has told me so often. He will give me grace, and all I want, if I can only look up to him. I must pray

always to remember those two precious lines :

“‘I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All in all.’”

Musing thus, Grace soon fell quietly asleep.



CHAPTER III.

“Oh, where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul?
'T were vain the ocean's depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole :

“Lord God of truth and grace,
Alone are found in thee
The light of perfect love—the rest
Of immortality.”

MONTGOMERY.

As the few days which remained of Miss Loveitt's stay were merely devoted by her to an examination of all that Julia had learned during the preceding year, it was not thought necessary for Grace to join her cousin in the school-room at present. She was therefore free to employ her time as she pleased ; and when, on the morning after her arrival, Julia was summoned to Miss Loveitt, the latter advised her to take her books or work

into the garden, and sit under the shade of the trees.

Grace acquiesced, and Alfred volunteered to conduct her to a pleasant spot, where a little rustic seat was placed beneath a spreading elm ; and here she settled herself much to her own satisfaction, amid the fragrance of the flowers and the joyous songs of the birds.

For some time Alfred remained with her, doing the honors, as he considered it, and entertaining her with marvellous stories of school prowess ; but presently he was called away, and Grace was then left alone.

Her thoughts soon wandered across the English channel to her mother, and she was lost in reverie, when the sound of voices suddenly recalled her to herself. Looking in the direction from whence the sound came, she saw Hector wheeling Rose along in a little carriage, which was

so constructed as to enable her to recline almost at full length. Grace observed them some time before they perceived her, for she was so surrounded by bushes that she was almost hidden from the sight of any one in the path. But they seemed to be approaching the spot where she sat, and she could distinctly hear all they said.

"I am sorry to leave you all alone, darling," observed Hector, "but I *must* go; I have a long morning's work before me. However, it is very pleasant here, and perhaps Julia or Alfred will come out to you by and by."

Grace felt quite surprised when she noticed the change in Hector's face. The cloud which had darkened it on the preceding night had entirely passed away, and as he looked at Rose his eyes seemed filled with a deep tenderness of expression, which considerably softened the

somewhat stern lines of his features. Rose gazed up at him with a loving, confiding smile, very different from the listless glance which Grace had remarked when first she saw her.

"Hector," she said now in a tone slightly lowered, while a most unwonted glow enlightened her wasted cheek—"Hector, I see some one sitting under the elm. I think it must be cousin Grace."

"So it is," cried Hector; "how fortunate. Now you and she can bear each other company. Grace," he continued, as she came forward to meet them, "you wont mind having Rosy with you, will you? She is ordered to be out of doors as much as possible in these fine days."

"I am so glad. We can be together then," said Grace; "it is beautifully cool and shady here."

"Very well; I'll wheel her near your

seat. She isn't much of a chatterbox; she won't disturb you if you want to read," replied Hector, glancing at Grace's book; and soon the little carriage was comfortably placed beneath a leafy canopy, which through the interlacing of its boughs revealed glimpses of the blue sky. Hector bent down over Rose, and whispered a few words in her ear. He hardly seemed like the same person who had flown at Alfred so fiercely.

"Good-by, darling. Drink in as much air as you can, my little white rose."

"Yes, Hector, I will," said the child smiling; "it is so pleasant here, and I like to be with Grace. Good-by."

He went away across the lawn, not leaping and whistling as Alfred would have done, but striding with rapid steps, his eyes turned towards the ground. Hector had always been a thoughtful,

earnest boy, and his disposition was silent and reserved. His temper was very passionate, and somehow he had always in his childhood been considered "the black sheep" of the nursery. He had lacked the playful, winning ways of his brother and sisters, and in consequence had never been so general a favorite as they. He had been accustomed to hear that he was "sulky" and "wicked," "the worst-tempered boy that ever was," until by degrees he had almost grown to believe himself so; and conscious that no one understood or sought to discover his deeper, gentler feelings, he shut himself up within himself, and proudly seemed to resolve that he would do without love.

His grandfather, who had been early prejudiced against him, saw in him only a disposition naturally violent and sullen. Alfred was frank, warm-hearted,

and affectionate ; Julia was pretty, bright and generally attractive ; but Hector—General Courtenay shook his head when he thought of him.

Only little Rose had as yet penetrated into the recesses of that really true and tender heart. Perhaps it was her weakness which won him ; perhaps it was her drooping frailness which excited his pity ; or perhaps it was the silent consciousness that she also knew something of what it was to have feelings hidden far out of sight, and not to be able to speak them out, or to share them with any human being.

Any way, Hector almost idolized Rose, and Rose fully returned his love. He cherished her, he longed to shield her from evil, and to protect her under the cover of his love ; and while she clung to him and nestled in his heart, she thought that she had never yet seen

or known any one so noble, or so worthy of admiration. It grieved her sorely to hear him reproved, to note the scoffing way in which Julia spoke of him. She longed to help him, and show the others how they misjudged him ; but still she feared that no words of hers would ever persuade them to regard him differently. And now she knew that the time was drawing near when she must leave him. Ah, that was the most bitter of all the thoughts which caused her to cry so plaintively, "Why must everything die?"

But now, lying in the pleasant shade, death seemed far away from her. All around her was so bright and sunny, and the sight of Grace's face, calm and quiet, as she now plied her fingers at some light work, gave her a feeling of repose.

"What are you making?" Rose asked at length, when for some time she had lain silently watching her cousin.

"I am making a little mat for a flower-glass belonging to mamma," replied Grace; "it is a very favorite glass of hers, and always stands upon her dressing-table, and I fill it with fresh flowers every morning."

"Did she ask you to make the mat?" asked Rose.

"No; but I noticed, before I left home, that the old one looked very shabby, so I thought I would make another, for mamma is very particular about that flower-glass; it is one that dear papa gave her long ago, before I was born."

"Did you ever know your papa?" asked Rose.

"No; he died when I was a little baby; I cannot remember him at all; but mamma has often told me of him, and I feel almost as if I knew him."

"How nice it must be for you to have such a kind mamma," said Rose.

“Oh yes; I can never be thankful enough for her. It seems so strange to be away from her now, but I know that she will write to me very often, and each letter I get will seem like one of our talks. Only I hope that she is not very anxious about poor aunt Alice.”

“Do you know your aunt Alice?” asked Rose.

“No; she is mamma’s only sister, but I have never seen her; she married a French gentleman, and always lives at Paris.”

Rose made no reply, and a silence of some minutes followed. A look of pain passed over her countenance; Grace saw it, and asked, “Do you feel worse?”

“No, thank you; it was only for a moment. I often feel a sudden shooting pang, which comes and goes like that.”

“You must be very tired of lying here so long,” observed Grace gently.

Something in the tone seemed to thaw Rose's reserve. "Oh, so tired," she said; "I cannot tell you how tired. I do try to be patient, but sometimes I wish that I could fly quite away, like a bird."

"That reminds me—" began Grace, but suddenly stopped and colored; at so short an acquaintance, she scarcely liked to introduce the subject of which she was thinking.

But Rose pressed her. "Of what?" she asked; "do tell me."

"I was going to say that your wish just then brought that text into my mind—I dare say you know it," said Grace, pausing; but finding that Rose waited for her to continue, she repeated, "'Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest.'"

"Is that a text in the Bible?" said

Rose. "I don't remember it, but it seems to put my thoughts into words. Who said it?"

"David, in the Psalms. I was reading it only the other day, and I like to think that he *is* at rest now."

"At rest? He is dead," cried Rose.

Grace looked slightly surprised. "He is at rest in heaven," she said.

"Oh, in heaven, of course. I did not know you meant that."

Rose said no more, but she lay silent for a time. Rest, the rest for which she longed! It gave her a somewhat new idea of heaven.

Grace meanwhile looked pityingly at her. She thought now that she had discovered the secret of that weary look upon the brow. The sick little heart had made no response as yet to that Voice which ever cries to the weary and sad, "Come unto me, and I will give

you rest;" and Grace prayed that she might henceforth be a messenger to Rose of that rest.

"Grace," said the little girl by and by, "I want to ask you something."

"Well, dear, what is it?" inquired Grace.

"I want to ask you not to think badly of Hector if you sometimes see him in a passion. He has so much to provoke him; and indeed he is not really bad. You don't know how very loving and gentle he has always been with me."

"I noticed how fond he seemed of you when I saw him with you just now," replied Grace.

"I am glad of that; and you won't think hardly of him? You won't condemn him too soon? I can't bear to see him disliked."

"Don't be afraid, Rose, I shall not dislike him. Indeed I begin to like him

already ; I cannot help it, when I see how kind he is to you."

"I was not always so fond of him," said Rose ; "but I think, since poor Louisa died, he has tried to make up to me for her loss. I loved her so very, very much, and she used to call me her child."

"Ah, it must have been hard to part with her."

The tears filled Rose's eyes.

"I can't talk about it now," she said ; "perhaps some time, when I know you better, I may be able to tell you more. I think I shall be able to tell you a great many things. I think I shall love you very much."

"And I you," said Grace ; and bending down she kissed the child's white forehead. "But now you look so tired. You have talked enough, I am sure. Would you like me to read to you?"

"Oh yes, so much, if you would like it too."

"I am very fond of reading aloud," replied Grace; "I often read to mamma. I have a book which I know you like; I will fetch it."

She snatched up her hat, which had fallen off, and ran to the house. Rose lay still the while, thinking how pleasant it was to be kissed and waited on by Grace. She soon returned, bringing with her "*Ministering Children*."

"I hope you have never read it before," said Grace; and receiving a negative answer, she began the first chapter. Rose listened with eager interest: the sick child, so tired of her weary bed, reminded her of herself, and little Ruth, in her unselfishness and tender care, appeared to resemble Grace.

"*That* child seemed glad to die," she thought to herself as her cousin finished

the chapter. "Thank you, Grace," she said, "I like that very much. Can you sing? I should like you to sing something to me, as Ruth did to the sick child."

"Very well, dear. What shall I sing?"

"Something about Jesus. I know so little about Jesus; and it was the thought of him that seemed to comfort the sick child."

Grace pondered for a moment, and then in a low voice she sang,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear."

Rose lay with her eyes closed, and before the hymn was finished she had fallen asleep; the sleep of death it might almost have been, she was so still and pale. As Grace watched her, she remembered a child whom she had often visited in a cottage at home. That child had looked very like Rose in the sum-

mer, and in the winter he was carried to his grave; and Grace felt that before many months were over Rose would be carried there too.

Suddenly Julia's voice sounded merrily upon the lawn, and Rose awoke with a start.

"I have done my lessons, Grace," cried Julia; "are you not glad? Now we can be together. Come along, and I will show you all over the gardens, and take you to see my pony. Ferrers is coming to fetch Rose into the house."

Ferrers, an old nurse who had been long in the family, and since Rose's illness had taken her under her especial care, made her appearance at this moment, and Rose, though somewhat reluctant, was wheeled away.

Grace meanwhile accompanied Julia, who led the way through the gardens.

CHAPTER IV.

“Oars alone can ne’er prevail
To reach the distant coast ;
A gale from heaven must spread the sail,
Or all our toil is lost.”

COWPER.

EARLY in the ensuing week, Miss Loveitt left Aberford. It was with much pain that she said good-by to the children who had been her charge for so many years ; and the tears fell fast as she kissed Rose, for she knew that in this world she could not hope ever to meet her again.

General Courtenay’s farewell was very cordial : “There is little that I would not give to keep you with us, Miss Loveitt ; indeed I scarcely know how we shall manage without you. I am sure Julia and Rose will never forget the care

and pains you have expended on them, and I hope you will often come and pay them a visit. Your old room will always be ready for you ; and if you cannot leave your mother, you must bring her too."

Miss Loveitt attempted to utter a few words of thanks, but they died upon her tongue, and just at that moment Julia advanced to bid her adieu.

"Good-by, Miss Loveitt ; I am so sorry you are going, but, as grandpapa says, you will come to see us. You must be glad to go, and rest at home. I will be sure to write, and tell you all that happens here."

And now Alfred, who was that day returning to school, and was to travel part of the way with Miss Loveitt, called to her in merry impatience, beseeching her to "make haste." She assented, stepped into the carriage, waved her

hand to the assembled group in the hall, and was gone.

Many sad reflections filled her mind and rendered her heart heavy as she drove away. The chief subject of these reflections was Julia. Miss Loveitt wished that she could have left her more gentle, more affectionate, more desirous to act from high and noble principles. She wondered how it was that her constant labors, her endeavors to impress her "charge" with a sense of duty, had failed. It was very wearying, very dispiriting, Miss Loveitt thought; and she sighed.

Ah, with all her knowledge, her fondness for teaching, her cultivation of mind, she had forgotten one thing, "the one thing needful," without which no earthly system can be truly blessed. Miss Loveitt had imagined that the love of Jesus, the importance of prayer, the joys

of heaven, were subjects which did not lie within the province of her instructions. It is true that she had daily read a chapter in the Bible with her pupils; she had questioned them on Scripture history, and had superintended their writing the morning's sermon from memory on Sunday afternoons. But all these things had appeared to Miss Loveitt totally distinct from the real business of the day. The reading finished, and the Bible laid on the shelf, no more was said about either until the appointed hour came round again. There was no application of its blessed precepts, its animating promises, to the common duties of each hour.

If only the love of Christ had entered into that school-room, how much easier the lessons would have become, how much sweeter all the play. The love of Jesus, that was the power which Miss

Loveitt failed to acknowledge. She did not lead her pupils to him as to the great and good Shepherd. She did not direct their hearts to him, reminding them gently, from hour to hour, that all their study, unblest by him, was vain. She did not teach them to take their evil tempers, their levity, their carelessness, their impatience to him, to be washed away in his blood. She did not endeavor to make the sweet stories of Bethlehem and Calvary and the mount of Olives precious and familiar to them. She did not strive to impress his image on their affections, as a tender Friend, a kind, compassionate Saviour, ready to help in all their little troubles, to sympathize in all their little joys.

Had Miss Loveitt made these things her care, had she thus tried to awaken in the hearts of her pupils an earnest love for Him who died, the Just for the

unjust, then she might indeed have hoped to see them growing up as she wished; for such love would have shown itself in their very life. When the Holy Spirit has entered the heart and imparted a sense of divine forgiveness, to walk as Christians becomes the earnest desire of every soul.

It is true that this spiritual life and peace is a gift from heaven, and that no mere human teaching can instil it. But it is also true that God has committed to man great power in influencing his brother man. We can endeavor to lead the hearts of those who are dear to us to our Saviour; we can also pray for them ourselves, that he may reveal himself to them; and he has promised that such endeavors, such prayers, shall in no wise lose their reward.

Julia was secretly rejoiced that Miss Loveitt had taken her departure. She

knew that she should now enjoy more freedom, and have more time at her own disposal; above all, there would be a temporary respite from lessons. Her delight at escaping from the restraint of the school-room overpowered any slight regret she might feel at parting from her governess.

After luncheon, while with Grace, preparing to go out, Julia observed, "Oh, Grace, I want to take you this afternoon to see Totty Barnes."

"Very well; but who is Totty Barnes?" asked Grace.

"Such a nice girl; not a lady though; but I like talking to her so much. She is the daughter of farmer Barnes, who is one of grandpapa's tenants, and lives just the other side of the park."

"I know some girls too at home, of whom I am very fond," said Grace,

"some who have been in my class at the Sunday-school, and some—"

"Oh, Totty Barnes is not of that sort at all," interposed Julia hastily. "Why, she has been to 'boarding-school,' as she calls it; and she can play the piano a little. She dresses almost as well as we do."

Grace did not say, what she could not help thinking, that these were no great recommendations in Totty's favor; but as Julia was now ready, the two girls set off.

"Totty Barnes' mother is dead," continued Julia as they pursued their way across the park; "she has been dead a good many years; and a disagreeable old aunt comes every now and then to stay with farmer Barnes, to see that all is going on right. Totty cannot bear her, she is so fussy, and wont let Totty have her own way in any thing."

“How did you become acquainted with Totty?” said Grace.

“Oh, it was in the first holidays after we came back to England. Miss Loveitt was away, and Rose beginning to be ill, and I was a good deal out of doors alone. Totty is very fond of leaning over the palings of her garden, and looking into the park, and I used often to see her there, and at last began to talk to her.”

“Is that the house?” inquired Grace, after a pause, as they came in sight of a small, brown, gable-ended building, the back of which faced the park.

“Yes, that is it, and I believe Totty is there, leaning over the palings as usual.”

Yes, Totty was there, and as they approached her, Grace observed that she was a bold-looking girl, tall and dark, in a smart though tawdry dress.

“Well, Miss Julia, so it's you, is it?”

were her first words, spoken in a loud, harsh voice, and a manner unpleasantly free: "I'm sure I'm very glad to see you; I thought you were never coming again."

"But I have come now, you see, Totty," returned Julia; "and this is my cousin, Miss Grace Courtenay, who is paying us a visit."

"Hope you're well, miss," said Totty, turning a bold stare on Grace, and dropping a pretence of a courtesy. Grace scarcely knew what to make of this new acquaintance, and stood silently by, while her cousin and Totty entered into conversation.

"Is any one at home besides yourself?" asked Julia.

"No, not a soul. Father, he's gone to market; and aunt, I'm happy to say she a'n't at Aberford at present."

"What a relief; is it not?"

"I should just think so. I do hate to have a body after me all day, lecturing me and following me about. But I lead a pretty easy life of it now she's away. Father, he don't hinder me in nothing."

Julia laughed. "You have more of your own way than I," she said.

"Well, for my part, I think it's mean and low-spirited to let one's self be ordered and put upon in the way some do. Why should one or two have all the rule, and others none? You've lost Miss Loveitt, I suppose?"

Julia nodded. "She went away this morning."

Totty leaned forward and whispered, in a voice too low for Grace to hear, something which seemed greatly to amuse both herself and Julia.

"I am not sorry upon the whole that she is gone," said Julia aloud, and Grace

perceived that they had been speaking of Miss Loveitt.

The two girls went on talking ; Totty giving forth her views on various subjects, and Julia agreeing with her in all. They ridiculed the dress and appearance of various persons in Aberford, discussed the summer fashions, and recounted the latest details of village gossip.

At length Grace suggested to Julia that it was time to go home. Julia reluctantly assented, and taking a worn and not very clean volume from her pocket, she handed it to Totty, saying, "I liked it very much ; have you another for me?"

"Yes, I have one here. I thought you might be coming, so brought it out. It is a lovely tale."

Julia received the book uneasily, and coloring as she felt Grace's eye upon her ; and then, bidding Totty good-by,



the cousins directed their steps homewards.

For some time not a word was spoken on either side, but when they came within sight of the house, Julia said, "Grace, will you do me a favor? I wish neither grandpapa nor Hector to know that I have been to see Totty; so will you oblige me by saying nothing about it?"

"I will say nothing unless I am asked," said Grace gently; "but Julia, dear, do you think it is right to go to her without grandpapa's knowledge?"

"Don't be silly, Grace," cried Julia petulantly; "I see no reason why grandpapa should mind my being with Totty; only it is just as well that he should not know."

"I do not think he would like your being with her; she does not seem a very nice girl," said Grace.

"You have such strait-laced notions,"

exclaimed Julia; "there is no harm in her whatever."

Grace made no reply; and Julia continued:

"I thought you would be nice, and that I should be able to find a companion in you; but now you go against me, and want to lecture me."

"Indeed, Julia, if it were even my place to lecture you, I should be very sorry to do it," replied Grace; "only I wish so very much that you would give up going to Totty Barnes."

"I tell you," said Julia, "that nothing shall induce me to give up going to her. I like her very much, and I have great fun with her, and, as I said before, I don't see any harm in her."

"Then, Julia, please never ask me to go there with you again. I am very sorry to vex you, but I cannot help it."

"Yes, you can help it," exclaimed

Julia. "I see you wish to set yourself up above me, but I do n't care : and after all, I can very easily dispense with your company when I go to see Totty ; only I hope you will say nothing to grand-papa."

"I have told you that I shall say nothing unless I am asked," replied Grace a little proudly. She was hurt and vexed at Julia's injustice to herself, and both surprised and grieved at her conduct with regard to Totty. But it was not long before her ready disposition to make allowances for the faults of others gained the ascendancy in Grace's breast. She reproached herself for having momentarily suffered a feeling of resentment to arise within her, and recalled to mind the numerous disadvantages under which poor Julia had labored.

Motherless, and to all intents and purposes, fatherless also, without any one

who might help her to understand the real purpose and end of life, ought not one who had ever been carefully trained and taught, rather to pity than blame her? So Grace argued; and throwing her arm round Julia's neck, she said, "Dear Julia, do not let this prevent our being friends. I do very much wish that you thought as I do about it; but any way, we must not quarrel, must we?"

Julia looked rather awkward, but she returned Grace's kiss, and for many weeks afterwards Totty's name did not once pass between the cousins.

But nevertheless this little dispute served to create a slight coolness in Julia's feelings towards Grace. She was conscious now that Grace's principles were far superior to her own; she was conscious that Grace's taste and inclinations were very different from her own. She could not help respecting Grace for

the moral courage with which she persisted in what she knew to be right; but at the same time, she did not hesitate in ridiculing that courage when she told the story to Totty Barnes on their next interview.

Julia had more than one reason for wishing to continue her intimacy with Totty. Their conversations were very amusing to her, and especially gratifying, as Totty seldom lost an opportunity of flattering the young lady's vanity. Moreover Totty was in the habit of supplying her with books, generally novels of a foolish tendency, if not positively evil. These Totty procured from a library at the neighboring town, and she contrived to make this little negotiation tolerably profitable to herself; for whereas she paid a penny for the loan of each volume, she was accustomed, on the same score, to charge Julia twopence. Gen-

eral Courtenay allowed his grandchildren an ample supply of pocket-money; and the greater part of Julia's share went in the holidays towards the books. During the half-year however, she could only pay stolen visits, few and far between, to Totty Barnes; for Miss Loveitt was very vigilant, and would on no account have allowed her pupil to hold any intercourse with the girl.

This Julia well knew; and thus it was that she suffered herself to fall into a regular system of deceit. The pleasure which she might not openly enjoy, she resolved to enjoy by stealth. The first secret visit weighed considerably upon her conscience; but the second found that conscience was more easy, and the third easier still. By degrees it ceased altogether to reproach her, until, at the time of Grace's visit, she was scarcely aware of the culpability of her conduct.

So it is ever: "Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte." The first advance in good or in evil is often painful to us; but as we persevere, our minds grow gradually reconciled to the change. The path to heaven becomes more easy, the path to hell more delightful, and from that time we go swiftly on, until we reach our destination: eternal glory on the one hand, eternal darkness on the other.

Let each one who is beginning to strive against evil encourage himself; he will soon find the struggle less hard. And let each who has ceased to strive, who is retreating from the battle-field, pause and look back, and consider well, before he gains the meadows of ease beyond.

CHAPTER V.

“Not only near the glittering sword
Doth war's fierce spirit dwell ;
The discord of the soul, a word,
A glance can speak too well.

* * * *

But thoughtless words may bear a sting
Where malice hath no place—
May wake to pain some secret sting
Beyond the power to trace :
When quivering lip and flushing cheek
The spirit's agony bespeak,
Then, though thou deem thy brother weak,
Yet soothe his soul to peace.”

S. A. STORRS.

It was on a bright September morning, some five weeks after the events recorded in the last chapter, that Julia, wild with joy, burst suddenly into the school-room.

“ Oh, Grace, Grace, something so delightful. What do you think? Here is an invitation for you and me to a grand juvenile party next Friday evening.”

"That will be very nice," said Grace.
"Whose invitation is it?"

"Mrs. Lyon's. She is a very rich lady, who lives about four miles off. I know her parties well; they are perfectly charming. What shall you wear, Grace?"

"I don't know; I suppose my white dress. I should think there would be plenty of time before Friday to settle that."

"Oh no, there wont. The shape of my frock will require altering. Let me see. I think I will have it freshly trimmed with lace, or perhaps some kind of a ruche might look better. I will run and ask Mary;" and so saying, she hastened from the room.

Grace meanwhile continued the occupation which Julia's entrance had disturbed. It was that of reading a letter which she had just received from her mother.

“My child, I am sorry to disappoint you,” it was thus that the letter ran, “but I greatly fear that it may be months before I am able to return home. Your aunt is better, but she is still so ill that her recovery is uncertain. I cannot leave her; and even when she begins to convalesce, she will require much more care and nursing than I should feel justified in leaving to strangers. It is a great comfort to me to feel that my darling Grace is well and happy. You know how often I think of you, and how I pray that our heavenly Father may keep you under the shadow of his wings.”

A few tears dropped upon the letter, for Grace earnestly longed to see her mother; but she remembered that the Lord Jesus was ordering this trial, and overruling it for her good, and by degrees a more cheerful expression returned to her countenance.

In a short time Julia reappeared.

"I have chosen my dress," she said, "and Mary has thought of some alterations which will improve it very much. But, Grace, I have been considering—would not my hair look much better if I could wear a few flowers in it?"

"I dare say it might," said Grace absently, for she was still intent upon her letter.

"Or a single blossom perhaps," continued Julia, "just one, such as Laura Mowbray wore the last time that she dined here. Her hair is exactly the color of mine, and it looked beautiful, arranged in the new fashion, and with no other ornament than a simple white camellia. But I know we have very few camellias now, and perhaps the gardener has not got one to spare. How tiresome it is."

As Grace made no reply, Julia sat silent for some minutes, revolving the

weighty matter of the camellia in her mind. At length she jumped up and ran out into the garden, announcing her determination to speak to the gardener on the subject; but after a time she returned with a fretful cloud upon her brow, and saying that there was not one camellia which would be sufficiently blown by Friday.

"Never mind," said Grace soothingly, "it does not signify. Your hair will look quite as nice without a flower as with one."

"No, it wont," returned Julia pettishly. "Besides, I have set my heart upon a camellia. I wanted my hair to be like Laura Mowbray's."

"Well, could you not buy one at the Aberford nursery gardens?"

"I don't choose to spend my money for that," replied Julia as pettishly as before; "and I can't ask grandpapa to

buy one for me, because he gave me my allowance only this morning."

"If I were you, I would think no more about it," said Grace. "After all, it is only a flower. It would last but a short time, and very likely no one would especially remark it."

Julia pouted, but made no answer, and Grace beginning to talk of something else, the camellia was for the time forgotten.

The days passed away ; Friday morning came. The two girls entering the drawing-room soon after breakfast, saw Hector busily engaged in the little conservatory adjoining it.

"Why, Grace," cried Julia, "I do believe that he has got a camellia there."

"Suppose we go and see," said Grace, and they passed into the conservatory.

Yes, there was a camellia, a beautiful

snowy one, nearly blown, its queenly head clustering among the dark green leaves, which served as a foil to its whiteness.

"Oh, Hector, Hector," exclaimed Julia, "where did you get that lovely flower?"

Hector turned round smiling, the dark look with which he generally regarded Julia wonderfully relaxed.

"Is it not a beauty?" he said. "I have been nursing it a long time; it was very sickly at first, but I have got it all right now. I want to give it to Rose."

"Where did you get it?" repeated Julia.

"I begged it of the gardener. He thought badly of it when he handed it over to me, but it has been well doctored since then. You see Rose is so fond of flowers," added Hector, turning

to Grace. "A camellia lives a long time, and it is one of her favorites."

Hector did not say, what he nevertheless well knew, that the chief charm in the flower to Rose would be the care and nursing he had expended on it; but perhaps he saw in Grace's look that she understood it all, for as he caught her eye his smile deepened.

"I don't see any use in giving it to Rose," cried Julia. "She would be equally pleased with any other flower. I wish you would give that to me."

"To you; why?" said Hector.

"Because I am going to a party to-night, and I want a camellia to wear. The gardener has not got another white one."

"Well, Julia, I really can't give you this," replied Hector. "I have reared it on purpose for Rose, and I mean to take it to her this very afternoon."

"That is very unkind. You know how I want it, and it would look so nice in my hair," cried Julia.

"I am very sorry, but it can't be helped," said Hector dryly. "I don't quite consider that your hair is more worthy of attention than Rose."

"You always pet up Rose," exclaimed Julia, now very angry; "but the camellia is not yours to give. It belongs to grandpapa, and I will ask him if I may not have it."

"Ask him, if you like to be so disagreeable," said Hector.

"I don't think it at all disagreeable," replied Julia, "and I certainly shall ask him. I'll go now."

"Stay a minute," said Hector, stepping forward and holding her wrist as she was about to run off—"stay a minute, and I will just take the liberty of telling you my opinion on the subject. I

have no doubt that my grandfather will instantly give you permission to have the flower, as his partiality for you somewhat exceeds his sense of justice. But I hope that, when you place it in your hair, your conscience will not be backward in reminding you of the vanity, the selfishness, the ill-nature, the meanness which form the price you have paid for it."

Hector's face was flushed, and his eyes glowed like fire. Julia cowered beneath his glance, but he released her wrist, saying, "Now go," and she quickly disappeared.

Grace, who was left behind, felt very uncomfortable; she did not know what to say or do, and therefore remained standing silently where she was. Hector took no notice of her, but continued bending over his plant. A few minutes elapsed, when General Courtenay's step was heard coming along the hall. Grace

felt rather alarmed, but Hector's countenance did not change as his grandfather entered. The general was evidently much displeased, and his voice sounded very stern as he said, "Now, sir, let me know the rights of this story."

"I suppose Julia has told it to you already," replied Hector.

"She has told me of your ungentlemanly and cowardly conduct," said the general, warming as he spoke; "of your refusing to give her that camellia, when she has no other to wear in her hair to-night; of the abusive way in which you addressed her, calling her mean, vain, selfish, and so on—terms which no right-minded youth of your age would use to a young girl. Now have you any thing to say for yourself?"

"I should scorn to implicate another for the sake of excusing my own conduct," replied Hector proudly; "and

therefore I will merely say that all she has told you is true; but the plant I have been training for Rose, and this is why I did not wish Julia to have it."

"Does Rose know that you are training it for her?"

"No."

"Then there is no occasion to give it to her. There are plenty of other flowers for her, and I dare say the gardener has camellias which will blow in a few days. Why, even here on this very plant I see some buds not far from bursting. There is no excuse whatever for you. Julia was quite alarmed at your violence. This must not go on, remember. Now you will cut off this flower and give it to her, and beg her pardon at the same time."

"I cannot, sir."

"Cannot what?"

"Beg Julia's pardon."

“You either do that, or leave my house. Now mark, I shall ask Julia before she goes to-night whether you have obeyed me; and if I find that you have not, I shall to-morrow begin to make inquiries after a tutor to whom I can send you. Do you hear?”

“I hear,” said Hector; and General Courtenay, turning round, was just leaving the conservatory, when he saw Grace beside him. His look and tone softened as he laid his hand upon her head, and inquired, “Well, my dear girl, have you any thing to say to me?”

“Oh, grandpapa, please don’t be very angry with Hector. He wanted so much to please Rose by giving her the camellia this afternoon. He forgot himself for a moment when he spoke to Julia. I don’t think he meant what he said.”

“Meant!” exclaimed the general. “But, Grace, by which am I to judge

him; by what he means, or what he does?"

"But you know it is very hard to *do*," said Grace pleadingly.

The general smiled, but shook his head and went out of the conservatory. Grace looked round half timidly towards Hector. He had gone away to the other end of the conservatory, and was leaning with his head against the glass. Grace thought he could not have heard what she said, and with a sorrowful step she left the place.



CHAPTER VI.

“Oh, might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife,
Lightening the load of daily life.” KEBLE.

GRACE had for some time been hoarding up her money, in order to purchase a large and handsomely bound Bible as a present to an old servant at home, of whom she was very fond. She had already saved a considerable sum, and hoped in a week or two to possess the requisite amount ; she was therefore careful to abstain from all unnecessary expenses ; but as she walked up stairs, on leaving the conservatory, she asked herself whether the purchase of a camel-lia for Julia might be reckoned under this head. She was aware that, at this

time of year, a camellia cost a shilling, and a shilling taken from her fund would cause a delay in getting the Bible. But then it would enable Hector to give his flower to Rose—it would be the means of cheering and pleasing poor little Rose herself; and perhaps it might even soften Hector's heart, and induce him to beg Julia's pardon. O yes; there was no doubt about it; Grace must buy the camellia.

Fortunately, at the very moment she made this determination, the maid who waited upon her and Julia appeared in out-door equipment.

"Where are you going, Mary?" inquired Grace.

"I have an errand, miss, in the village. I shall not be away more than an hour."

"Shall you be passing by the nursery gardens?"

“Yes, miss, I shall,” replied Mary, “and I may very likely go in for a few minutes, as my brother is one of the under-gardeners.”

“Oh, then I will trouble you to get something for me.” And Grace explained what she wanted, gave Mary the shilling, and afterwards, with a heart considerably lightened, went to inquire after Rose.

Rose's room was one of the most cheerful apartments in the house. It was large, light, and airy, and had three lofty windows; it contained many beautiful pictures, amusing books, and other treasures, for General Courtenay had spared neither pains nor expense in making it as pleasant as possible for the young invalid. She now lay on a comfortable sofa, drawn up to one of the windows; and Ferrers, who esteemed it as much her delight as her duty to watch over

her young mistress, was seated near her at work.

Rose's face brightened when she saw Grace; and Ferrers, knowing that she was leaving her in good fellowship, took her departure. Grace sat down in the chair vacated by the nurse, and took one of Rose's hands in hers.

Much paler, much thinner, much more wasted was little Rose, since the day on which our story last concerned her. Her eyes shone brighter than ever, and the look of thought was still busy upon her brow. But it would not be very long now, little Rose, before that look of thought should be taken away.

"Do you feel better this morning, darling?"

"Yes, thank you. And when I see you come in, Grace, I always feel better."

"Would you like to have me read to you; or is your head too tired?"

"Oh no, it is not too tired; besides, listening to the reading rests it. I think you left off last time at the end of the twenty-fourth chapter."

"Yes, dear, so I did," replied Grace as she opened a well-worn volume. It was not "Ministering Children" to-day; that had been long finished; and that, and the conversation on it, had led to another book, a book divine and holy, and comforting beyond any other to be found upon earth.

Grace began to read the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and the sick girl listened earnestly, holding her cousin's hand all the time.

Rose was beginning, though by slow degrees, to know something of the reality and life of religion, the love of Jesus; she was beginning to long after that love, and to pray to be filled with it. She was beginning, now and then, to

catch glimpses of the glory which lies hidden beyond this mortal life.

It was Grace who, by the blessing of God, was helping Rose to choose this "better part;" and Rose had consequently grown to love Grace ardently, and to cling to her with that earnest affection of which her tender heart was peculiarly susceptible.

The reading was finished, and Grace was just closing the book, when a low knock sounded at the door, and Hector entered. He half retreated when he saw his cousin, but, on second thoughts, came on, and kneeling down by Rose's sofa, asked her how she felt.

There was a sorrowful tone in his voice; Rose noticed it, and stroking his dark hair softly with her hand, she said, "Hector, is any thing the matter?"

Hector attempted to laugh it off, but finding that he could not succeed, he

asked, after a while, in a would-be indifferent manner, "Rosy, what would you say if I told you I was going to leave you?"

Rose smiled incredulously.

"You are not going to leave me though," she replied.

"I fear I am," said Hector; "I am going away from here; and if it were not for you, I should be glad, for I lead a pretty life of it, what with one thing and another. But it is hard to leave you, my little sweetheart."

"But, Hector, I don't understand; what is it?" cried Rose in an agitated voice. "Why are you going; and where?"

"The fact is, I have had a row with my grandfather. He wants me to beg Julia's pardon for something in which she has been more in fault than I, and has told me to choose between doing this

and going to a tutor at a distance. I can never beg pardon of her, so there is no alternative. I must go."

Rose's cheeks had turned still paler than before, and her large eyes were dilated. She looked appealingly to Grace, and from Grace again to Hector, and then buried her face in the cushions, and burst into an agony of tears. It was in vain that they attempted to soothe her; her sobs rather increased than abated, until both Grace and Hector began to be alarmed.

"My darling Rose, please do not cry. I beg of you to be quiet," said Hector, throwing his arms around her. "You will make yourself worse; do try to stop."

"Oh, Hector, I can't help it," sobbed out the child. "If you only would ask Julia's pardon."

"Yes, if you only would," Grace

ventured to say, as she stood behind him.

Hector looked very gloomy. "It is beyond human nature," he said; "I cannot stand the way in which she behaves to me—I cannot beg her pardon."

"But don't you think it would be right?" said Grace gently; "I am sure you will be sorry afterwards, if you do not."

"Oh yes, indeed, Hector, you will—you will," cried Rose, half starting up. "I must die, Hector; and I shall die the sooner if you go. Perhaps it may be selfish to talk of myself in this way, but I know you care for me; and Oh, I want you to care for Julia. It will be so bitter to die, knowing that I leave you unhappy, without any one to love you, or any one whom you love in your home. Hector, dearest Hector, I do not ask you many things."



Hector was moved ; he never allowed himself to think that it was even possible for Rose to die, and he would do or bear any thing sooner than hear her mention the subject.

“Well, Rosy,” he said at last, “I will submit for your sake, but only for your sake, remember ; only because you are such a foolish little thing, and cry your eyes out at whatever vexes you. I wish, though, that I could do it for Grace’s reason, because it would be right,” he added, looking round to the place where Grace had been standing.

But she had left the room ; she had heard Mary’s voice in the passage, and anxious to ascertain whether the camellia had arrived, had slipped quietly away. Almost as Hector spoke, she reappeared, her eyes and cheek glowing with pleasure, and in her hand a splendid white camellia.

“Oh Grace, Grace,” cried Rose, “he has promised; he is going to ask her pardon.”

“I am very, very glad,” said Grace earnestly; and then, with a meaning look at Hector, she continued, “See what I have bought for Julia to wear in her hair to-night.”

“How beautiful!” exclaimed Rose; but Hector looked up with a heightened color.

“What, Grace, you have bought that? But I thought you were saving up your money for a particular purpose.”

“So I am,” said Grace, coloring also; “but a little delay is of no consequence, and I very much wanted to give this camellia to Julia.”

Hector said nothing more in Rose's presence; but when the luncheon-bell rang, he and Grace left the room together, and as soon as the door was

closed behind them, he seized her hand.

“Grace, indeed I do not deserve this kindness. It was not enough that you spoke for me to my grandfather, but you have bought this also: I wish you had not.”

“It has made me very happy,” said Grace.

“You see,” continued Hector, looking down and speaking rather confusedly; “you see it is so hard to bring down my temper, and I know what a wretched one I’ve got, well enough; but don’t think I’m quite without heart, and I’m very much obliged to you for being so kind to Rosy.”

“I love her very much,” replied Grace with a slight look of surprise.

“She is the only one I get on with here; all the rest think me such a good-for-nothing fellow, and perhaps they are

right. But still it is pleasant to know that somebody cares for one, and I can't tell what would become of me if—”

He paused, and Grace said timidly, “But you know we have some one who cares for us always.”

Hector looked up quickly. “What do you mean?”

“I was thinking just then—I hope you don't mind my telling you—I was thinking of that verse in the Bible which says, ‘He careth for you.’”

Hector was silent; Grace feared lest she might have vexed him, and as they went down stairs she could not help saying, “I hope I have not made you angry by reminding you of that.”

“Angry! Oh no; thank you very much,” said Hector earnestly; and then they went into the dining-room.

Julia was there alone, and Hector at once going up to her, apologized for hav-

ing spoken to her so roughly, and asked her to forgive him.

Julia readily assented; and so peace was made. She was very silent during the meal; her conscience accused her of having been no less in fault than her brother, and some little struggle went on in her secret heart as to whether, after all, she should consent to relinquish the flower. But for this small act of self-sacrifice her vanity proved too strong; and it was therefore a great relief to her when Grace produced a camellia even more lovely than the one she coveted, and begged her to accept it.

She wore the flower in her hair that night, and if it failed to yield her the amount of pleasure she had anticipated, Grace at least was blessed with that deep happiness which is the portion of the peacemaker.

CHAPTER VII.

“Jesus, perfect my trust,
Strengthen the hand of my faith ;
Let me feel thee near when I stand
On the edge of the shore of death—

“Feel thee near when my feet
Are slipping over the brink ;
For it may be I'm nearer home,
Nearer now than I think.”

CAREY.

It was Sunday evening. Church bells were ringing in the distance, but otherwise an unbroken stillness prevailed all around. The sun had set, and the peaceful twilight was gathering over the earth. The trees in the park began to look grey and shadowy, and the outlines of the far-away hills were sinking into dimness.

Grace sat beside the window in Rose's room. She had been reading, but the book had dropped into her lap, and with folded hands she was gazing silently out,

thoughtfully watching the deepening shade.

Rose lay as usual upon the sofa ; she was not so well this evening, and had fallen asleep.

The sweet church bells had a Sabbath sound, and as Grace listened to them, her heart seemed drawn away from earth to the "land that is very far off." She thought of the "everlasting spring," the "never-fading flowers," the "sweet fields," so green and calm and still beneath the heavenly skies ; and while thinking of these things she could almost fancy that she saw them, and the chiming of the bells seemed blending with the chords of angel minstrelsy.

Her reverie was interrupted by Rose, who suddenly awoke with a start, and called to her, "Grace, are you there?"

"Yes, dear. Have you had a nice sleep?"

“ Oh yes, and such a lovely dream. I dreamt of the old days long ago when I was well and happy, and it seemed as though Louisa and I were walking together in a beautiful place near Hyères, a place where we often used to walk before she grew so much worse ; and the sky was so blue, and the flowers were so delightful, of such bright colors, and smelling so sweetly. Then suddenly the scene changed, and we were rowing down the Rhine. I saw the vineyards on the banks, and the mountains stretching to the clouds, and the boatmen were singing a strange wild song, and a white swan was sailing on the water near us, and so I awoke.”

“ Had you not better go to sleep again, and dream some more ? ”

“ Oh no ; I could not dream like that again. But how I wish it were real. I have such a longing to see the mountains

once more, and the vineyards, and to feel the sweet fresh air. We used to spend such happy days abroad. I can hardly believe that now it is all over, and that I have seen my last of them, and am going on so fast to the silent grave."

Grace rose from her seat and went to kneel by the sofa, saying, in a low tone, "Don't say that, darling;" but Rose was excited now, and she continued talking.

"Yes, Grace, it is quite true. I am dying, and I don't want to die. The world is—Oh, so beautiful, and I love it so much. I love the trees and the flowers and the birds, and I cannot bear to leave them. It is autumn now; the leaves are beginning to fall, and I shall never, never see them again; I shall be gone before they come back: and the grave is such a gloomy place, Grace; it

frightens me to think of it. Oh, why must I die, when I am so young?"

"Hush, Rose; you should not talk in this way, dearest. You are mistaken, indeed you are. You will not go to the grave when you die; it is only your body that will be there—your tired little body, you know, which gives you so much pain. It will rest there, and before long it will crumble away, and you will see it no more till it rises at the last day; but *you*, Rose, if you love Jesus, and find in your heart that peace and forgiveness which the Holy Spirit gives, the thinking part of you, the part of you which loves and hopes and wishes, will rise up far above, to a world more beautiful than this, to a home where many friends will meet and welcome you."

"But I must leave so many behind," said Rose.

“Only for a little time, we soon shall come to you; and till then you will have Jesus and the holy angels, and thousands of others who have lived and died upon the earth like yourself. And then you will be so safe—out of reach of all trouble, sin, and pain. Oh, sometimes, when I think of that world, I could almost wish to go with you. But this hope, dear Rose, of the bright and happy future, we can only have through faith in Jesus Christ.”

“Who taught all this to you, Grace? What is it that makes you so different from other girls?”

“I did not know that I was different from other girls,” replied Grace; “but mamma has taught me to love these things ever since I can remember.”

“I wish that you had been with poor Louisa when she died,” said Rose; “she had no one to teach her and help her, as

you teach and help me, and she was often so unhappy. May I tell you all about her? I feel inclined to talk to-night, and I have wanted to tell you about her for some time."

"I shall like to hear very much," said Grace; and Rose continued:

"Louisa was always very delicate, and the doctors were afraid of her going into a decline; so grandpapa took us, as you know already, to live abroad for her sake. We went to a good many places, one after the other, travelling among the German watering-places, and staying some time at Ems. Last of all, grandpapa hired a very pretty little villa at Hyères, in the south of France, and there we lived until Louisa died.

"Hyères was a quiet place compared with some that we had seen before; but we all liked it, it was so shady, and the country so beautiful. There were many

invalids brought there, for the air is very balmy; and in the cemetery were many English graves, the greater number those of young people; but several of the invalids whom we saw were taken home again much better, and this encouraged Louisa, and made her hope that she too would recover.

“I wish you could have seen Louisa. She was—Oh, so beautiful. Her face, as I remember it, was generally either very pale, or else just tinted with a delicate pink, although latterly she often had a bright rose color, which came on in the evening. She was rather short, and very slight. There was something in her air which always made me think of a drooping flower.

“She was very sweet-tempered too, and very merry, so that every one who saw her liked her. I think I told you that they called me her child. I was

much smaller then, you know, and she used to pet me, and tell me long stories that she composed herself. They were strange, wild stories, about countries far away, and beautiful fairy regions and cities up in the stars. I once for a few nights slept in a little bed in her room, and I know she used to lie awake, watching the stars and thinking. I wondered at such times how it was that there seemed such a searching look in her eyes.

“We had not been at Hyères long before she grew much better; indeed we all thought her nearly well, and grand-papa began to talk about coming to England. But the doctors advised him to stay in France another year, that her health might be entirely reëstablished, they said; but before that year was out, Louisa had grown worse again.

“I remember one Sunday evening—

it was her nineteenth birthday—we were all in the school-room with Miss Loveitt, who had been reading aloud, and Louisa said in her bright way, ‘Well, Miss Loveitt, you none of you expected me to live to be nineteen, and yet here I am, almost as strong as any of you, and looking forward to returning to England next year.’

“ ‘Yes, you certainly are wonderfully improved,’ said Miss Loveitt to her.

“ ‘Louisa was silent for a few minutes after this, and then she said more gravely, ‘I wonder where I should have been now if I had died when I was so ill. I often think of that, and it puzzles me.’

“ ‘It need not puzzle you, my dear,’ Miss Loveitt answered; ‘you would be in heaven, of course. You have always been a good, affectionate girl, and anxious to do right.’

“‘But I have often been naughty too,’ said Louisa.

“‘Yes ; but in a general way you have been good. God is very merciful ; and if, on the whole, we endeavor to do our duty, he will not be over-stern in punishing our faults.’

“‘Louisa said no more ; but she was not satisfied, I know, for she afterwards remarked to me, ‘I wish I knew whether Miss Loveitt is right in her opinion of God ;’ and then she sighed, and looked very thoughtful for a moment, but soon was merry again.

“‘The next week grandpapa gave a large party. I had gone to bed, but they told me about it next day—how Louisa talked and laughed, and charmed all the ladies and gentlemen. But she overtired herself, for before the people went, she fainted suddenly away, and was carried to her room.

“It was from that time she seemed to grow weaker, and Miss Loveitt noticed that her cough, which she had lost, was returning. All through the winter she grew worse and worse, but always thought that she was better, and her laugh was happy as ever when she said that the time was very near now for her to return to England.

“She often talked about Aberford, and said how glad she should be to see it again, and wondered whether the old servants would remember her, and if they would think her much altered. But yet sometimes, when she had been left alone, we used to find her crying; so grandpapa said that she was low-spirited, and got her every amusement he could think of.

“The spring passed away, and still she went on growing worse. At last the summer came. One evening in June

she and I were sitting together ; she had been unusually silent that day, and by and by she said, 'Rose, I sometimes wonder—I dare say it is only fancy—but I sometimes wonder whether, after all, I ever shall recover.'

"I began to cry, but she took no notice, and went on speaking, her great eyes looking steadily out into the trees.

" 'You see I feel so ill sometimes, and my cough seems as if it would not go away ; and Rose, if I should indeed die, where should I go ; what would become of me ?'

"I answered, 'Miss Loveitt said you would go to heaven ;' but she shook her head sadly.

" 'Miss Loveitt does not know. She calls me good, but I am not good really. I have done many wicked things, and I am afraid to appear before God, whom I have so disregarded and disobeyed.'

“I could not reply, and she continued: ‘I have not thought about religion enough, and I don’t know how to pray. I have always thought the Bible dry, and have heard that it was too gloomy a book for sick people. I have been too fond of gayety and pleasure, and I have had no one to force those things upon me, no one to explain them, no one to tell me how to love them. I know that Jesus died for our sins, but I cannot go to him; I don’t know how, and I am too wicked. He would not accept me now, I fear, when I have wasted all my life, and only come at the end of it because I am afraid. But still, if I only knew—if I only could go to him properly, I should be so glad. Rose, do you think that grandpapa would let me see a clergyman? If you will run and ask him to come to me, I will talk to him about it at once.’

“I ran directly ; grandpapa came, and they had a long talk. At the end of it, I went into the room. Louisa was smiling again ; all her unhappiness seemed gone, and grandpapa was saying, ‘My darling, you are gloomy and weak and low-spirited. I must take you somewhere for a change. But you shall see a clergyman, if you like ; only wait until to-morrow ; perhaps then you may feel more cheerful ; if not, I will send for him ; we will see. Are you contented now, dear ?’

“Louisa kissed him, and told him he had cheered her wonderfully already, and then she went up to bed.

“Afterwards I crept into her room ; I always loved to be near her, and I knelt down by her pillow ; she was just dropping off to sleep. She put her arm round me, and wished me good-night, and called me her darling. Then she fell asleep.

I was still beside her, when she said, as if talking in a dream, 'Am I going THERE? *That* country is not England.'

"After this all was very still, and I was just on the point of going, when she began to cough violently. This awoke her; she opened her eyes, and suddenly blood rushed from her mouth, and she seemed struggling for breath. I was frightened, and rang the bell loudly. Grandpapa, Miss Loveitt, and some of the servants came running into the room; they got between me and the bed, so that I could not see it; but somehow there was a shriek and a confusion: I heard Louisa's voice once more exclaim, '*That* country is not England;' and then came a deep, dead silence, and Miss Loveitt said, 'She is gone.'

"I remember no more, for I fainted at the words, and when I awoke, was in my own bed."

"And was Louisa really dead?" said Grace.

"Yes, really. Oh, Grace, that dreadful time; I can never forget it. And now I can scarcely bear ever to think of her, for I don't know where she is, and—"

Rose shuddered, and covered her eyes with her hands.

"Grace, do you think she is with Jesus?"

"Dear Rose," said Grace soothingly, "I can quite well understand how hard it must be for you to feel that in this life we can never know for certain where she is. But don't you think it better to trust it all to Jesus, and to rest contented to leave it in his hands? We know how very wise and good he is, and how he always orders every thing for the best; and we know too that Louisa did wish to love him, and was already be-

ginning to seek after him when she died. He accepted the dying thief at the last moment of his life, and he is anxious that all should be saved. So I wish you would try and set your mind at peace ; for Jesus is over all, and he knows best."

"Oh what a Saviour he must be," cried Rose, suddenly throwing her arms round Grace ; "how thankful I am that I have you to tell me of him. I see now how ungrateful it is to put off thinking about him to the end. Will you pray to him to make me a child of God, and to be with me when I die?"

"I will indeed, as I do always," said Grace ; "and I know that he will hear our prayers, for he has promised."

At this moment Ferrers entered with a light, and Grace, seeing that Rose was very tired, bade her good-night, and went away.

CHAPTER VIII.

“The highest hopes we cherish here,
How soon they tire and faint.
How many a spot defiles the robe
That wraps an earthly saint.
Oh for a heart that never sins ;
Oh for a soul washed white ;
Oh for a voice to praise my God,
Nor weary day nor night.”

ABOUT this time two young ladies of the name of Murray came with their parents to stay a few days at Aberford. They were good-natured girls, but wanting in judgment, and they very openly expressed their admiration of Grace. They praised Julia also, but not so highly, for they had taken a great fancy to Grace ; and indeed they lost no opportunity of making her aware of this fact.

The morning after their arrival was wet, so that it was impossible to leave

the house, and they were therefore compelled to find amusement within doors. Grace and Julia brought various things to show them, and among these was a portfolio of choice water-color paintings.

"Oh, the sight of these pictures gives me an idea," cried the eldest Miss Murray, who was extremely fond of drawing. "Do you think, Grace, that you would have patience to sit for your portrait?"

"I dare say," replied Grace, blushing and smiling. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I am engaged upon a painting at home, and want a model for one of the principal countenances. Your face would just answer the purpose, if you would allow me to draw it."

Grace instantly consented.

"I am so glad that I have seen you," exclaimed Miss Murray, as she rubbed her colors. "Your face quite embodies

some vague ideas of beauty which have been flitting about in my head for some time."

Grace was in secret not ill-pleased to hear herself extolled. She at first thought Miss Murray rather foolish, but soon changing her mind, found her delightful. The morning passed rapidly and pleasantly; and at luncheon Grace detected herself making private comparisons between her own eyes and those of Julia, who was seated opposite. She checked herself at once, for her mother had always specially warned her against any fault of this kind; but she did not feel the same quick compunction of conscience which usually followed upon her slightest yielding to temptation.

Grace had never been accustomed to think much about herself; and it had seldom before occurred to her to consider whether her features were well-formed

or the reverse. Mrs. Courtenay had succeeded in convincing her that mere personal beauty is in itself of small importance. But now Mrs. Courtenay was not by to counteract the evil effects of Miss Murray's ill-bestowed flattery, and somehow the words of admiration seemed very agreeable.

After luncheon, the rain having ceased, the whole party went out into the park. Miss Murray possessed herself of Grace, and made her walk with her, to which arrangement Grace was indeed nothing loath.

The conversation fell upon balls, theatres, and operas, and Miss Murray gave her companion a long account of her last season in London.

"Shall you not be glad when you are old enough for such things?" she inquired of Grace.

"I do not suppose that I shall ever go

out very much," answered Grace ; "mamma would not allow me, I know."

"Why not?" exclaimed Miss Murray in surprise.

Grace was rather at a loss for a reply ; for although she quite well knew her mother's opinions, she shrank from confiding them to one who, for aught she knew, might only ridicule them. Mingling with this feeling was another, hitherto a stranger in Grace's breast : unconsciously she was beginning to feel somewhat ashamed of the difference between her mother's opinions and those of Miss Murray. She therefore merely said, "Mamma does not approve of too much gayety."

"Ah, but she will alter her mind when you are grown up," replied Miss Murray, laughing. "You will be such a pretty girl that she will be unable to resist the temptation of exhibiting you."

Grace was silent, but felt more and more self-complacent; and this mood continued during the whole of the day. She made no effort to throw it off; her good principles were for the time forgotten, overpowered by the force of the temptation.

When Julia and herself went up to bed, and she was alone in her little dressing-room, she sank into a seat and built up a pleasing castle in the air, of which, almost for the first time in her life, herself was sole owner and occupier. At length rising, she began to undress; and this finished, she sat down as usual to read her evening chapter. As she opened her Bible, her eye fell upon the card which was pasted on one of the fly-leaves. This card contained a list of questions for self-examination, and Grace was accustomed to use them every night.

She had almost forgotten the task this

evening, but the sight of the card recalled it to her memory. The little preliminary prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," sobered her in great measure, and she began the questions thoughtfully. With the first of these came conviction; it was a very simple inquiry: "How have I spent the day?"

How indeed? In seeking the glory of God? In following the footsteps of Jesus? In searching to be more pure and blameless each moment in his sight? In striving to work for him? In helping or comforting others? In fighting down all temptation? In keeping a steadfast gaze above?

All the circumstances of her fault flashed instantaneously upon her mind; she could not bear it, and falling on her

knees beside the chair, she burst into a fit of crying. The tears shed were tears of bitter repentance. She would have given much to recall the hours of that day, to live them over again. But no, this was impossible; they were past and gone, gone up to the book of God's remembrance.

A long time Grace remained upon her knees in prayer, seeking forgiveness and strength; and when she arose was much humbled, feeling that "in herself dwelt no good thing." Thus she was led to cling closer to Jesus; for she knew now better than before how impossible it is to cling to the so-called pleasures of the world on one hand, and to maintain that sweet communion with the Father on the other. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Ere she laid her head upon the pillow she had formed some new resolutions,

and determined, by the help of the Holy Spirit, never to allow her mind to dwell on her own personal appearance. She determined to labor more than ever for that hidden beauty, the beauty of the soul; she determined to lose no opportunity of reminding herself of her own weakness; and she determined that, should Miss Murray inquire again concerning her mother's opinions, she would speak them out unhesitatingly, as circumstances might require, never more, by the grace of God, allowing herself to be "ashamed of Jesus."

Having laid down these rules for herself, Grace felt much happier, and ere half an hour had elapsed she was soundly asleep.

The next morning she prayed earnestly for strength; but having once yielded to temptation, she found that it was now more than ever difficult to resist and

forestall its advances. Proud and vain thoughts constantly found their way into her heart; and it seemed to Grace that the more steadfastly she withstood them, the more frequently did they return. This was indeed a day of conflict; but Grace knew that she well deserved it, and when, on going to rest that night, she looked back through the past hours, she felt that even this constant struggling was far better than the deceitful calm into which she had previously fallen.

Miss Murray asked her no further question concerning her mamma's opinions until the last evening of her stay, when Grace happened to be alone with her.

"Grace," said she, "I feel rather curious to know on what ground your mamma would object to your going to balls and parties?"

"She would not object to my going

sometimes to friendly gatherings," replied Grace; "she would only disapprove of my forming the habit of going out every day and every night, as many people do, which one way or another has an influence for the worse."

"I for one, when I am in London," said Miss Murray laughing. "But come, do you agree with her?"

"Yes, of course I do; I always agree with mamma," replied Grace simply.

"But tell me your reasons?" said Miss Murray, laughing still more.

"There are a good many reasons," answered Grace; "but the chief is, that life was not given to us to spend in nothing better than pleasure."

"Why *was* life given to us?" asked Miss Murray.

"The Bible says we are to spend it for the glory of God, preparing for eternity," replied Grace.

"Oh, I see. You have picked up some Methodistical ideas," exclaimed Miss Murray. "I think it a pity, Grace, that *you* should adopt such rigid opinions."

"But they are real; they are true," cried Grace earnestly. "We *must* die; we *must* leave this world some day; we cannot help it. And life is very short."

"Yes, I know it is short," said Miss Murray; "but over-religious ideas will not help to make it longer."

"We cannot be over-religious," exclaimed Grace. "We can make our religion unattractive, but we can never have too much of it."

"I call it having too much, when it prevents you from sharing in any innocent amusement," said Miss Murray.

"But indeed it does not," replied Grace; "it makes all innocent amusements sweeter. It only teaches us not

to look for our chief happiness here, lest we should lose it hereafter."

"We cannot exist without happiness," said Miss Murray.

"Very true. And that is the very aim of our holy religion, the grand scheme of a loving Father to redeem sinful man, and make him happy in this life and that which is to come. People who have never experienced this do not know what true happiness is. You cannot tell how sweet it is to feel that Jesus loves you, and that when you die you will be with him for ever and for ever. The happiness which is only obtained from the things of this world will die with us; but not so with treasures in heaven."

"Don't you think a good deal of all that may be fancy?" said Miss Murray.

"Oh, no, no; if you only felt it, you would not say so. If you only felt it, you would consider no trouble and no sacri-

fice too great to bear for Him. In fact, that which you consider to be a sacrifice, to me is none. Such things would interfere with my spiritual comfort."

★ Miss Murray looked thoughtful for a moment; then laughing again, she said, "You are quite a little preacher, Grace. If I listened long to you, you would persuade me to don a suit of sober gray, and to go out with musty tracts and cups of gruel for the dirty people in cottages."

A sudden impulse seized Grace. She went up to Miss Murray, and throwing her arm round her, looked up into her face.

"Oh, Miss Murray; if I could only say something to show you what the love of Jesus is. You will want it some day; indeed you will, when you are dying, and earth seems fading away. Then there will be no more balls or parties; and this short life will be ended, and the new life,

that is to last for ever, will be coming fast upon you. Oh, if you have not Jesus then, what will you do?"

Miss Murray stooped to kiss Grace's forehead, and as she did so, a tear-drop fell upon the fair young cheek.

"Perhaps I will think of this some day," she said in a low and half-choked voice; and then, rising hurriedly from her seat, she left the room.

Many a time in her after life that scene recurred to Miss Murray: many a time Grace's voice seemed still beside her, repeating over and over again the words, "When you are dying, and earth seems fading away." They followed Miss Murray about; they haunted her; she could not silence or avoid them; and after a while, God blessed them, and she was led to see herself as an unsaved sinner.

She began to long after One who could

never die, and who would receive her when she was dying—after a country which can never fade, and which would harbor her when earth seemed fading. And so, in longing, she began to seek; and in seeking, at length she found; and a peace fell on her which she felt far better than any worldly pleasures can bestow.



CHAPTER IX.

“Not with the trifier gay,
To whom life seems but sunshine on the wave;
Not with the empty idler of the day,
My lot.”

BONAR.

It was not until October that General Courtenay procured a governess to his taste. He then heard of one who seemed in every way fitted to superintend Julia's education; but this lady would not be able to come to Aberford before the ensuing January; and in the interim Julia was left to do pretty much as she chose. It was true that General Courtenay himself volunteered to help her and Grace each morning in their lessons; but to this plan there were continual interruptions. The general was perpetually being called away by en-

gagements still more pressing. His steward wished to see him; or morning visitors summoned him to the drawing-room; or the early post brought important business letters which required immediate attention; and thus there were scarcely four mornings out of the six on which Julia and Grace were not despatched to the school-room to finish their tasks by themselves.

There were many lessons indeed which they were well able to continue alone; and General Courtenay signified it as his wish that a certain number of hours each day should be set apart for this purpose, as though a governess were with them; but Julia took advantage of the absence of any controlling power to spend much of the time allotted for study in occupations more to her taste. Grace, on the other hand, who was anxious to learn, and desirous that her mother when

she returned should find her improved, did her best to be industrious and to wade through her difficulties, sometimes asking Hector's help when any weighty passage in her history, or a sum unusually abstruse, threatened to baffle her endeavors.

The days thus spent in regular work passed quickly and pleasantly. Grace wrote every week to her mother, and received frequent letters from her; and this constant correspondence in great measure alleviated the trial of separation. She was now quite domesticated at Aberford. General Courtenay had grown very fond of his hitherto unknown grandchild; and between herself and Rose a friendship had sprung up which was a source of great happiness to both. And yet it was not perhaps, strictly speaking, a *friendship*; it was more the union which is often seen to

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exist between a stronger and a weaker spirit.

Rose leaned upon and confided in Grace, as we lean upon and confide in some one better and wiser than ourselves. She was the sunshine of her sick-room, and it was through her instrumentality that she first learned to look upward to things beyond. She loved to see Grace sitting near her, to hear her sing, to feel the touch of her hand. She was quite contented to lie for a long time silently watching her face.

Grace equally loved to be with Rose, but from a different reason. She liked to comfort her, to minister to and supply as far as possible her many little wants. She liked to soothe her when troubled—to pet her and caress her. She esteemed it one of her highest privileges to help the sick child's heart to

throb for those joys which earth cannot afford.

The general said that he fancied Rose was better since she had grown so fond of her cousin; and better in one sense she certainly was, for her mind was more at rest.

But if Grace's principal friend was Rose, her chief companion was Julia. They shared together every pursuit; they were together in the school-room and in the bedroom; they walked, drove, and rode together. Yet their intimacy never ripened into any thing more than companionship.

Julia was always constrained when with Grace. There were certain topics of conversation which she felt she must then avoid—her interviews with Totty Barnes, for instance, and the novels from the circulating library.

Again, there were many things dear

to Grace in which Julia took no interest. She often feared lest she might be acting wrongly in so seldom mentioning the highest and most sacred subjects to Julia; but then she feared to dictate, and dreaded lest through inefficiency or awkwardness she might do more harm than good. The time was coming when, more forcibly than by any words, she was to be the means of impressing her cousin with a conviction of the truth.

Grace had resolutely kept her word with regard to Totty Barnes. She had never accompanied Julia on any of her visits to the farm palings, and in fact had not again met with Totty since the day of their first acquaintance.

One afternoon, however, towards the end of October, when Grace and Julia were returning from a stroll in the park, they saw a figure coming towards them, whom Julia instantly recognized, ex-

claiming joyfully, "Oh, there is Totty Barnes."

"Please don't stop to talk with her," said Grace persuasively; but Julia made no reply. There was no help for it. Totty had perceived them, was quickening her pace, and the next moment was at their side.

"Well, Miss Julia, this is quite a *rom-dey-voo*," she began in her usually bold manner. "I've just been up to your place with some eggs, but I never thought to meet you as I came back. Shall I turn again, and go a piece of the way home with you?"

"O yes, please do, Totty," cried Julia with a determined glance at Grace. "I should like it very much; it is some time since I have seen you."

The three therefore proceeded towards the house, Totty walking familiarly on one side of Julia, and Grace silently

keeping pace on the other. In this manner they had gone some hundred yards, when Totty suddenly stopped short in the middle of a sentence, and exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Julia, a'n't that your grandpa yonder?"

Julia started, coloring violently, and looked up in alarm. Yes, General Courtenay was close upon them, riding quickly down the avenue, and it was impossible that he should not have observed Totty Barnes.

"I'll go," cried that young lady. "Good-by, Miss Julia; good-by, Miss Grace;" and so saying, she vanished among the trees.

"Who was that, Julia?" inquired the general, reining in his horse as soon as he had arrived within speaking distance.

Julia was silent, and her grandfather's face bore an unusually stern expression as he continued,

“If I am not much mistaken, your companion just now was the daughter of farmer Barnes. Is it not so?”

Julia stammered out some unintelligible reply. She seemed much confused; and the general said, “Are you in the habit of associating with that girl?”

“No—yes. Sometimes I—at least—I do n’t know—I have seen her before,” murmured Julia.

“I desire that you will see her no more then,” replied the general, much displeased. “I must say that I am not only astonished, but disappointed, at finding you in her company at all. I thought that, although your governess was away, you might be trusted to behave as if she were present. To say nothing of her being in station and education a most unsuitable companion for you, she is, as I have often heard, a bold, unprincipled girl. I can imagine noth-

ing less desirable than that either you or Grace should have any thing to do with her."

The general paused, but Julia made no answer. She was very much alarmed at her grandpapa when his anger was excited against herself; and she now stood with her head bent down, nervously playing with the button of her glove. The general turned to Grace:

"Grace, I think you seem more steady than Julia. I trust to you to see that she remembers what I have said. I forbid her to carry on any further intercourse with this girl. Do you hear?"

"Yes, grandpapa," answered Grace.

"Now, Julia," said the general, "remember what I have said;" and he put spurs to his horse, and rode away.

He was no sooner gone than Julia burst into tears. Grace attempted to console her, but in vain. Her self-love

had been sorely wounded by the reproof she had received, and she ungraciously repulsed her cousin, saying, "I wont be ordered about by you, Grace, though grandpapa does say that you are more steady than I am."

"Dear Julia, I am sure I have no desire to order you about," exclaimed Grace. But Julia did not reply, and the rest of the way was traversed in silence.

They did not see General Courtenay again until the evening. His manner to Julia was then the same as usual; for although easily displeased, his anger never dwelt long in his remembrance, and he did not for an instant believe his favorite grandchild capable of disobeying him.

He would have been sorely grieved could he but have discerned the thoughts that were still working in her brain,

while she sat quietly at the table, to all appearance thinking of nothing but a collar which Grace was teaching her to embroider.

The fact was that Julia was deeply interested in a book which Totty Barnes had borrowed for her. She had only read the first volume as yet, and was burning for the second. She knew that the second was in Totty's possession; but under the present circumstances, how should she be able to procure it?

She knew Grace too well to imagine that she might be persuaded, under any pretence, to connive at a secret interview. At the same time she feared that such an interview could not be contrived without Grace's knowledge. Grace had always been aware of her previous visits to Totty, although she was unable to prevent them; and the two cousins were so constantly together, that Julia

feared she could not devise any scheme by which to steal out into the park alone and effect her purpose.

After much consideration of the subject, she came to the conclusion that it was only left to her to trust to chance. Some plan hitherto unthought of might strike her, or some unlooked-for circumstance favor her wishes. At any rate she would wait and see; and with this resolution Julia retired to bed.



CHAPTER X.

“How David, when by sin deceived,
From bad to worse went on ;
For when the Holy Spirit’s grieved,
Our strength and guard are gone.”

NEWTON.

THE autumn sun shone bright and warm into the pleasant school-room. Julia and Grace were sitting there together, Julia drawing, and Grace with bent brow poring over a huge French history.

The door opened, and Ferrers looked in.

“Will one of you two young ladies be so kind as to sit with Miss Rose for an hour? She is fast asleep; but she mustn’t be left alone, lest she should wake, poor dear, and want something. I am obliged to go out.”

“I will go, Ferrers,” said Grace, ris-

ing; but to her astonishment Julia interposed:

"No, Grace, let me. You are always with Rose; *I* should like to go to her for once."

"Very well," replied Grace, reseating herself, "just as you like. I have plenty to do here."

"You must please to be very quiet, Miss Julia," said Ferrers as she left the room, "for she's been in such pain all day it would be a cruelty to rouse her."

During the last three days Rose had been considerably worse, as she had by some means or other caught cold, and was therefore confined to her bed. Julia followed Ferrers on tiptoe into the room, and the good nurse established her with her drawing at a little table, giving her many injunctions not to stir until her sister should awake. This done, she took her departure, carefully closing

the door behind her; and soon afterwards Julia, looking out of the window, espied her crossing the park on her way to the village.

She watched the old woman out of sight, and then glanced towards the bed. Rose was sleeping very calmly; she looked as though she might not awake for hours. It was now exactly half-past two o'clock, and Julia knew that Ferrers could scarcely return before half-past three. She stood for a moment undecided, looked once more at Rose, once more out of the window, and then, her resolution formed, she quietly left the room.

Stepping lightly across the passage, and past the school-room door, she soon gained her own apartment, in which she locked herself. Hastening to the wardrobe where her mantle and hat were kept, she hurriedly equipped herself in

out-door costume. Her veil she could not find ; she therefore took that of Grace, and muffled up her face with it as well as she could. She now cautiously unlocked the door, and stood for some time in a listening attitude on the threshold. Then, having satisfied herself that the coast was clear, she sped rapidly down stairs across the hall, and succeeded in reaching the park unobserved.

Julia was at all times a fleet and light-footed runner ; her steps were now quickened by the fear of discovery, and she seemed scarcely to touch the ground as she hastened along in the direction of farmer Barnes' house. At length she came within sight of the palings, and there, to her great delight, was Totty in the garden, waving her pocket handkerchief too as a token that she recognized Julia. That young lady soon arrived at the palings, and in a few hurried words

explained the cause and the secrecy of her visit.

Totty did not seem so much surprised as Julia had expected on hearing of General Courtenay's prohibition. The fact was, that, secreted behind a tree, she had heard every word that he had said to his granddaughter concerning her.

She gave Julia the book she wanted, advising her to return it by post, if she found another visit impossible.

"That I certainly shall," replied Julia.

"Ah, it's a great pity," said Totty, who did not, however, choose to betray the full extent of her mortification—"it's a great pity, more especially as my aunt is just on the point of starting to go home, so that I am my own mistress again for some time, and should be able to see you oftener. But never mind; we can't help it now. Some time

or other, when that mean little thing Miss Grace has gone, we may."

Julia said that she must return home immediately, and only lingered to acquit herself of her debt to Totty, which was considerable, and emptied her purse to a penny. She then bade the girl adieu, and hiding the book in her pocket, retraced her steps.

She had gone several yards in safety, when, greatly to her alarm, she fancied that far behind her she heard a call. She paid no further attention to it than to redouble her speed. Her veil caught upon a thorn-bush; she vainly tried to disentangle it, but finally burst away, leaving the veil suspended. Faster and faster she ran, until, to her relief, she found herself in her own room once more.

Carefully she removed her things, and replaced them in the wardrobe; then, smoothing her hair and composing her

countenance, she repaired to Rose's room.

Here all was just as she had left it—Rose still asleep, and the drawing materials lying undisturbed upon the table. On referring to the clock, she found that she had been only half an hour absent, and being somewhat reassured, she sat down and applied herself to her pencil.

The house this afternoon was unusually still, but to Julia's troubled mind it seemed replete with sounds. Every now and then she started, fancying that she heard a footstep, and the very songs of the birds outside the window sent a nervous thrill through her frame.

The door opened very gently, and Julia jumped up in alarm; but it was only Grace, who entered noiselessly, with a small bouquet of flowers in her hand.

“Why, Julia, how pale you are,” she exclaimed. “Are you not well?”

“Yes, I am quite well,” said Julia irritably. “What do you want?”

“I have been out to gather a few flowers for Rose. See, I will lay them on her pillow, and she will see them when she wakes. Are are tired of sitting here, Julia?”

“Yes, I am rather,” said Julia. “What a long time Ferrers is away.”

“Shall I change guard with you. I am quite fresh, having just come from the garden.”

“Thank you, I should be very glad,” replied Julia; and gathering up her pencils and paper, she left the room. It was quite a relief to get out into the passage; the air in Rose’s apartment seemed suddenly almost stifling. Julia went into the school-room, and sitting down at the table, leaned her head upon her hand.

Her mind was full of troubled thoughts; she felt almost certain that the voice

which had called after her had been that of her grandpapa. If it was so, if he had indeed seen her, and discovered her visit to Totty, how should she ever bear to face his anger? It was not merely an act of disobedience, it was also one of deceit; and Julia was well aware that General Courtenay bore an especial antipathy to all modes of underhand dealing.

As she sat brooding over these things, and feeling utterly miserable, a heavy step sounded on the stairs, coming towards the school-room. Julia started up; she knew the step well; and she had only time to seize a book, and assume the air of being deeply interested therein, when her grandfather entered the apartment.

“Julia,” he said, and his voice had that peculiar tone which it always took when he was very angry—“Julia, which

of you two girls did I see talking to that Totty Barnes again just now?"

Julia made a powerful effort to command her countenance, while at the same time a weight seemed to be removed from her spirit. The general had not decidedly recognized her; he had no proof that it was she whom he had seen. This thought passed like a flash of lightning through her mind, while, as calmly as she could speak, she asked, "When do you mean, grandpapa?"

"This afternoon; about twenty minutes ago. I was in the park, not far from farmer Barnes' house, when I saw that girl at the palings, talking to some one who, as it seemed to me, bore a remarkable resemblance either to you or Grace. However, I would not allow myself to suspect that either of you could be guilty of such dishonorable conduct, so I walked on without taking any par-

ticular pains to discover whether I was right or wrong ; but a few minutes afterwards I saw the figure whom I had before observed running at headlong speed towards the house. She was nearer to me than at the first time, sufficiently near indeed to convince me that I had not been mistaken, but that either you or Grace she certainly was ; which, I could not distinguish, as I am so short-sighted and you so much resemble each other. But now I ask you, Julia, is it possible that you have betrayed my trust ?”

Julia cowered beneath the general's penetrating glance. “Grandpapa, please don't look so angry. It was not I you saw.”

“It was not ? I felt sure that would be the answer. I did not know, as I told you before, how to suspect you of such deliberate disobedience ; but at the same time,” added the general

musingly, "can I suspect Grace of it either?"

"Perhaps you *were* mistaken," murmured Julia; "it might be one of the girls out of the village."

The general took no notice of this suggestion. He stood in meditative silence for some moments, and then inquired, "Where is Grace now?"

"With Rose."

"How long has she been there?"

"Only a short time. Ferrers came into the school-room at about half-past two, and asked one of us to go and sit with Rose, as the nurse had business in the village. I went, and stayed there some time, and a few minutes ago Grace came and offered to change."

"Had she been out, do you know?"

"I suppose so, for she was dressed in her hat and cloak, and she brought some flowers for Rose."



"Just go and ask her to step to me for a minute," said the general; but as Julia was leaving the room, he called her back.

"Ha, I had almost forgotten. This veil—whose is it?"

The color flooded Julia's cheeks; it was the same she had left hanging upon the thorn-bush in the park.

"It belongs to Grace," she replied; and a cloud passed over the general's brow.

"I could not have believed it," he muttered to himself, and then motioned Julia to go. She obeyed, and speedily returned, accompanied by Grace, whose bright face looked not as belonging to one who was concealing a great fault.

"Is this your veil, Grace?" inquired the general, holding up the tattered piece of blonde. Grace took it from his hand, and examined it in surprise.

"Yes, grandpapa; but how can it have

been so torn? It was not so the last time I wore it. Where did you find it?"

"Nay, Grace, I should think you can best answer that question."

The general's manner, indicative of a suppressed storm, alarmed Grace. She turned pale; her grandfather observed it, and was confirmed in his opinion.

"Well, have you any thing to say?" he asked coldly.

"Oh, grandpapa, what have I done? Please tell me. Have I made you angry in any way? I don't understand."

"You understand better than I do, I imagine," replied the general; and then he proceeded to repeat to her the story which he had already told Julia.

"Indeed, grandpapa," cried Grace when he had concluded, "I have not been into the park to-day."

"What did you do then while your cousin was with Rose?"

"I finished reading my French history first, and then went down into the garden to gather a few flowers."

"But that veil. I saw it torn from the hat of the figure who was running. I took it from the bush. I now find it belongs to you. How can I believe you?"

"I don't know how the veil came there, grandpapa, but I have neither seen nor spoken to Totty Barnes since the day you met us in the park."

The general pondered for a little while ; then snatching up his hat, he cried, "I'll settle the matter at once. I'll go to the girl, and find out from her who has been with her."

So saying, he left the school-room, and Julia in blank dismay soon heard the hall door close behind him.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh, faint not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer *and be strong*."

LONGFELLOW.

"If you please, Miss Julia," said the little maid who waited upon the school-room, going up to Julia, where she knelt at the window the picture of listless despair—"if you please, Miss Julia, here is a note just come for you."

"A note; who from? Who brought it?" cried Julia, snatching a soiled and badly-folded billet from the servant's hand.

"A boy brought it, miss. He looked like farmer Barnes' little cow-boy. He did n't mention who had sent it, but said it was very particular. I think people

sometimes do send that boy about on errands, miss."

Julia listened impatiently; then tore open the note. It was written in a straggling hand on a quarter of a sheet of paper:

"Your grandpa has been here. I guessed how the land lay, and told him it were not you as come to me, but Miss Grace; so mind you keep it up, if you don't want to disgrace

"TOTTY BARNES.

"P. S. The lad as brings this is quite safe. I shall tell him to run very quick, so as to be at the house afore your grandpa. He don't know that the note's from me, and is too stupid to care, so you needn't be afraid.

"T. B."

A mixed feeling, in which Julia did not know whether shame or relief predominated, stirred her breast as she finished reading this note. One moment

was there of better things—when Julia had almost resolved to cast the tempter behind her, to free herself, confess herself in the wrong, and bear her grandfather's just anger. But then the thought of all the punishment, the degradation, the exposure, rushed upon her, overwhelming every higher feeling. One earnest prayer for strength, one heartfelt appeal to Him who is always ready to aid, would have enabled Julia to rise above the evil, to stand forth more than conqueror. But she had not accustomed herself to look to Him; she had never realized that to Him she was accountable for all her actions, and therefore now, in the time of trial, no thought of Him crossed her mind. The temptation overcame the better impulse. The better impulse fell, and great was the fall of it.

Her decision made, Julia arose from the window. She crumpled up the note

and put it, as she thought, into her pocket; but in her agitation she only slid her hand down one of the folds of her dress. The paper fell upon the floor, and unperceived by Julia, lay there.

She seated herself at the pianoforte, and began to practise, as Grace, who had been to put away her hat, entered the room. Grace's countenance was undisturbed; she knew that she was innocent, and felt assured that her grandfather's interview with Totty would prove his suspicions misplaced. She did not however know how to account for the discovery of the veil, and could imagine no better solution of the mystery than the possibility of her having dropped it the preceding day, and its having been found and appropriated by the girl whom the general had seen in the park.

She now began to gather together the books, slates, and other tokens of study,

which were lying in an untidy litter upon the table. The general was at this moment entering the house. Julia heard him in consternation; Grace with a feeling of relief.

Just as his footsteps sounded in the hall, she stooped to pick up some papers which had fallen on the floor. Among them was the note.

Grace supposed it to be something of her own, and carelessly ran her eye over its contents. In a moment she discerned the whole of the matter. The truth in its fulness flashed upon her. All the strength seemed momentarily to forsake her frame as she saw what lay before her; but she hastily resolved on what course she should pursue. She tore the note into a thousand pieces, and threw them into the waste basket. At that instant the general opened the door, and came in.

He took no notice of Julia ; his eye, stern, searching, severe, was bent on Grace, with a look as though, if possible, he would read her very soul.

“Grace,” he said, “come with me. I want you in my study.”

Grace followed him down stairs, her heart busy meantime in prayer, asking Jesus to stand by her, never to forsake her, to be her strength and sustenance in this great trial. Still she felt very much frightened, as the general ushered her into the study, closed the door, and placed a chair for her directly opposite his own.

Some minutes elapsed before he spoke. Then in a deep, and to Grace, awful tone, he asked, “Well, Grace, have you any thing to say to me?”

Grace burst into tears ; her sobs impeded her utterance, and the general continued, “I have been to Barnes’

house, and have seen his daughter. I asked her, without hesitation, which of my granddaughters had just been with her at the palings. She attempted evasion, but soon found this retreat cut off. She then confessed that Miss Grace had paid her a visit."

The general paused, and bending forward, looked at Grace, but she made no answer, and he proceeded:

"I asked the girl if you had been in the habit of visiting her. She hesitated and equivocated to such a degree that I could obtain no satisfactory reply. But from what she did say, I infer that this is by no means the first time that you have met her in the same place. What motive can have induced you to disobey me thus? What especial pleasure you may experience in her society I know not; but this I do know, Grace, that you have disappointed and dismayed me

more than I can find words to express. At present, it only remains for me to ask you whether you have any excuse to offer."

"I told you before, grandpapa," cried Grace, "that I am innocent of this. I have not been to Totty Barnes to-day, and I have never been in the habit of paying her visits."

"Do you still persist in your denial?"

"Oh, grandpapa, I know it is all against me; but I must persist in my denial, because it is true. I have not done this; Oh, will you not believe me?"

"I wish I could believe you, Grace; but as you yourself admit, all the facts are against you. What possible motive could this Totty Barnes have for accusing you unjustly? She shuffled, she prevaricated, she did all she could to avoid mentioning your name. I would go back to her, and ask her again, only that I

know she would still persevere in the same declaration. No, Grace, I am very sorry, I grieve to say it, but I fear that you have been, that you still are deceiving me."

Grace had ceased crying; she now sat silently, her head bent down, her eyelashes drooping. She was again praying for strength and guidance.

"If you will confess your fault, I will even now forgive you," continued the general in a milder tone. "There is nothing in my eyes so despicable as deceit, and depend upon it, it always defeats its own purpose. Do you hear me, Grace?"

"Yes, grandpapa."

"Then why do you not answer?"

"I don't know what to say, grandpapa; I have told you the truth."

The general rose hastily, pushed aside his chair, and said, "You had better go

to your room for a quarter of an hour, and consider what truth is. At the end of that time, you can return to me."

Grace obeyed; and during her absence, the general, in uneasy thought, paced up and down the room. He fully believed that she was guilty; no suspicion crossed his mind concerning Julia, and it seemed to him perfectly incredible that Totty Barnes should, on such a matter, have told him a falsehood.

The quarter of an hour had only just expired, when Grace reappeared. The general looked closely at her, expecting to read in her countenance the traces of guilt. But even he, whose eyes were prejudiced, was obliged to own himself mistaken. Her face was troubled indeed; it still bore the traces of tears; but above the tears, above the trouble, rose an expression which told of inward calm.

The general did not know what it was to feel the deep heart-peace which Jesus gives to his beloved; but he was well acquainted with the serene happiness which springs from a quiet conscience, and as he looked at Grace, he felt half inclined to change his mind and believe her innocent. But the strong and abundant proof to the contrary recurred to his memory, and his opinion remained unshaken.

"Well, Grace?" he said, when he had again caused her to seat herself opposite to him.

"I can only say what I said before, grandpapa. I am not deceiving you."

"And this is your ultimate answer?"

"Yes."

"Very well, I am sorry to hear it. In a court of justice the custom is to believe every man innocent until he is proved to be guilty. Now, in my mind

you *have* been proved to be guilty: but perhaps some might judge otherwise; and in consideration of this absence of positive certainty, I will not deal with you as I should feel it my duty to deal with you were the fact more clearly established. I shall still allow you to associate with your cousins, to take your meals with us, and in short, remain with us on an equal footing as before. But at the same time you must remember that this is only on sufferance. I cannot treat you, I cannot feel towards you as I have hitherto done. My esteem, my affection, you must consider forfeited."

Grace's tears now flowed afresh. To hear her grandpapa, generally so kind, so indulgent, speak to her in this cold, unrelenting manner, seemed almost more than she could bear. But her tears had no effect upon General Courtenay. He considered it, under the circumstances,

his duty to make her feel as bitterly as possible the unhappy consequences of her guilt. "Now you can go," he said, "and send Julia to me."

Grace obeyed; and as she was about to leave the room, he observed, "At any other time, I should think myself obliged to write to your mother, and give her a full account of this affair; but I cannot bring myself just now to add this trouble to her other anxiety."

Grace thanked him earnestly for his kind consideration, though the heaviness of her trial was much increased by the feeling that she was even debarred from the sympathy of her mother. But Grace was far too unselfish to think of this.

She found Julia, gave her the general's message; then once more retiring to her room, sought comfort in communion with God.

CHAPTER XII.

“Be strong to bear, Oh heart,
Nothing is vain.
Strive not, for life is care,
And God sends pain.
Heaven is above, and there
Rest will remain.”

SLOWLY, sorrowfully for Grace, did the gloomy month of November pass away. Her aunt at Paris, though considerably better, was not yet out of danger, and she did not know how long a time might elapse before her mother's return.

Meanwhile the stigma of disgrace weighed heavily upon the poor girl's mind. Throughout the month the general's manner to her was unaltered, excepting perhaps it grew still colder, still more distant, as weeks rolled by. She could see that all his trust in her was

gone. He never asked her to do any thing for him. He never spoke to her indeed, when it was not absolutely necessary. If, unasked, she offered him any little service—if she placed his stool for him, or wheeled his favorite chair nearer the fire—he thanked her, it is true, but as he might thank a mere stranger. Sometimes—and this was harder than all to Grace—he would enter the room, and if she were at the other end of it, his short sight would lead him to mistake her for Julia; under this delusion he would begin to speak to her, perhaps charge her with some little commission; but in a few moments, discovering his error, his tone and manner would instantly change; he would stop short in his speech with, “I beg your pardon, I took you for Julia,” and disappear in search of her cousin. It was at such times that she especially felt the

bitterness of the reproach that rested upon her.

Hector, on the very first day of her disgrace, had had an altercation with his grandfather concerning it. He refused to believe Grace guilty, declaring there must be some "foul play," and indeed did great harm to her cause with the general by his impetuosity. Finally, perceiving that nothing he could say had any effect in changing the general's opinion, he resolved to keep silence on the subject until such time as he should be able to discover some proof of her innocence. Unknown to any one except Rose, he went to farmer Barnes' house, and had an interview with Totty. But he was unable, as he expressed it, to "get any thing out of her," although his doubts concerning her truth were confirmed by her suspicious manner. However, he made a discovery which he

hoped might one day be useful to him. This was, that Totty's aunt had left the farm only a few minutes after the time at which Totty professed to have seen Grace. This aunt was to return in December, and to spend her Christmas at Aberford, and Hector had great hopes that one interview with her would go far towards righting his cousin.

In his own mind Hector had a secret suspicion which, although he disliked the thought of it, augmented daily. He had sometimes before seen Julia in company with Totty, and he now noticed that Julia, since Grace had been in trouble, had lost much of her vivacity, and that her gayety seemed forced. She was growing subject to long fits of abstraction, from which she would awake with a start. If at any time the general summoned her to his study, she would turn pale, and her face would bear an alarmed expres-

sion, as though there were something to be dreaded. She seemed as far as possible to avoid Grace, and to be uneasy when in her company. All these things Hector observed, and drew his own inferences; but he said nothing of them to any one as yet.

Rose was now more than ever a blessing to Grace, and the cousins grew daily dearer to each other. No transient doubt, no fear of evil, arose in the child's mind to shake her full confidence in Grace. She was naturally of a trusting disposition, and in this instance she would sooner have suspected her own existence, than that Grace could be capable of deceit. Her loving words and manners, her caressing little ways, fell on Grace's sorrowful heart like balm.

Nevertheless her trial would have been almost too hard for her to bear, had she not been supported by strength

and grace from above. During this month Grace was much in prayer. She felt that God was ordering all things for the best. She knew that the course she was pursuing was the right. "If," says St. Peter, "when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." She trusted in him to uphold her in it, and to keep her firm to the end. She trusted in him also to declare her innocence and to restore her to favor in his own good time.

It was not without many struggles that Grace attained this spirit of patient confidence in God, and especially found it hard to subdue resentful feelings towards Julia.

The first day of her disgrace Julia said to her, with the intent still further to cover her own guilt, "Well, Grace, where are your fine sermons about my going to Totty now?"

Grace turned round with flashing eyes, and was on the point of breaking out in terms of angry condemnation, when, suddenly remembering herself, she subdued the passionate feeling, and as soon as possible retreating to her own little dressing-room, redoubled her entreaties for divine guidance and assistance. Could she doubt that she was heard, when, after her prayer, she found it so much more easy to be meek and quiet, so much more easy to resist the temptation to be angry?

The fifth, sixth, and seventh verses of the thirty-seventh Psalm were continually in her mind, the fifth especially; and she now more than ever loved to read the accounts of our Saviour's meekness and gentleness, even when at one word he could have brought to destruction all those who persecuted and reviled him.

She never forgot to pray for Julia and Totty; and this, more effectually than any thing else, served to dispel all wrong feelings towards them.

But yet there were times when Grace felt utterly wretched, when all hope and courage seemed gone, and she cried in her misery, "Oh, why, why does not God help me? Why does he let me suffer when I am innocent?"

But it seemed to her that always after one of these dark intervals, some little alleviating circumstance occurred; either Hector spoke very kindly to her, or Rose showed more than usual sympathy, or an especially affectionate letter reached her from her mother. Thus in all she recognized the hand of her heavenly Father upon her, and in the midst of cloud and darkness could still trust and wait for sunshine and light to return.

Meanwhile Julia, the only one besides

Grace who knew the truth, watched her conduct with an ever increasing respect. Sometimes unawares would steal in the wish, "Oh that I myself were like her;" and sometimes, overcome with remorse, she was on the point of confessing all, but could not summon resolution to meet the subsequent disgrace. She grew more miserable every day; a kind word from her grandfather or from Grace seemed often almost insupportable. She had returned the novel by post; the transient pleasure derived from it was over, and only the long train of deceit and self-reproach remained, to mar her peace by night and by day, and to imbitter her every pleasure.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Christ leads me to no darker rooms
Than he went through before ;
He that unto God’s kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door.
My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim,
But ’t is enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with him.”

BAXTER.

As November waned, Rose became so much worse, that General Courtenay sent for an eminent physician from London, to hold a consultation concerning her with the medical man of the family. On the day appointed for the two doctors to meet, Hector did not go to his tutor’s as usual, but joined Grace and Julia in the school-room. There they waited, while the hushed stillness of the house, only now and then broken by a footstep or by the closing of a door, denoted that something unusual was taking place.

More than two hours passed away, when a carriage rolled up to the door. The doctors issued from the house, stepped into it, and drove away together; and the little party in the school-room knew that Rose's fate was, humanly speaking, decided. They remained in breathless suspense, not one of them daring to go to inquire the result which each felt anxious to hear. At length the general's step was heard in the passage; he entered, vainly strove to speak, but utterance failed him. One glance at his face sufficed to reveal the truth. Rose's brief term of this life was measured.

The general recovered his self-possession, and in few words told his grandchildren all. Her constitution was worn out, the disease was in the ascendant, creeping steadily on day by day. The pains might be much alleviated, the fever in great degree diminished, the feeble

life a little while prolonged by stimulating medicine, by tender nursing and care. But the time was fast drawing on when all such mitigations would avail nothing. For death there is no earthly remedy, and Rose must die.

As the fatal sentence fell from the general's lips, a sudden gleam of sunshine broke through the window and illuminated the room. Certain heavy clouds, which had before obscured the horizon, now seemed to be dispersing; while the sun, like a ball of living fire, was sinking to his rest. Was there aught of a fair token in the change--aught that heralded to Rose a joyful deliverance from fitful storms and troubled skies, to glory everlasting and unspeakable?

A fortnight had flown by since the consultation. It was Sunday evening, the thirteenth day of December. The

fire in Rose's room was burning low, and only one dim candle was lighted. She lay propped up with pillows in her bed, a happy expression on her face, her large bright eyes turned towards Grace, who was sitting beside the fire.

The book was in Grace's hands ; she was about to read, when the door opened gently, and Hector entered. He said nothing, but merely knelt down by Rose's side, and Grace, in a low, clear voice, began her reading.

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

“And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him ; Jesus knowing that the Father had

given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper—”

“Grace,” said the sick girl, “will you stop there for a minute? I want to realize it. I want to realize ‘He loved them unto the end.’ I want to realize that I am going to him, to that same Jesus.”

Grace stopped; she could scarcely refrain from crying: Hector maintained an unbroken silence.

“Grace, Grace, will he love *me* to the end? Will he take me up too where *he* has gone—to God?”

“Grace just managed to answer, “Yes, darling, you know he will;” but she could say no more, for her voice seemed choked with tears.

“I cannot, cannot imagine it,” said Rose; “to see Him, to hear his voice; the very same Jesus to whom we pray,

of whom we read in the Bible—the very same : Oh how I wish I could understand it.”

But here Hector broke out passionately, “Hush, Rose, you must not talk so ; you must not speak of dying. I cannot bear it.”

“Dear Hector,” said the child, extending her hand towards him : but he took no notice of her ; his head was buried in his arms, and his frame was now convulsed with heavy sobs.

For some time Rose lay quite silent, feeling herself powerless to soothe him ; but presently she said, “Hector, wont you listen to me ? I want to speak to you.”

He made no answer ; and finding all was quiet, she continued :

“Hector, I want you to think when I am gone that I am happy and at rest. It does not seem all clear to me yet : I

do n't quite feel to know where it is that I am going ; but I do know one thing—that I shall be with Jesus.

“ Sometimes, when I try to look forward to that world, and to fancy what it is like, I feel bewildered and almost frightened, it seems all so far off, so mysterious ; but then I look to Jesus, and try to lean my heart on him, and remember his promise to be with me and never to forsake me, and all grows bright again.

“ Hector, I can trust myself with him. I can trust him to take care of me ; and I want you so much to love him too, and to go to him for comfort. I lie here, Hector, and pray, and pray that you may, and ask him to be far more to you than I could ever be. He has been to me sweeter than any words could tell you ; and though I am only a little weak girl, and you are so strong and bright,

yet we both want happiness alike, and we can only find it in him.

“Oh, Hector, if any thing can add to my happiness, I think it will be the knowledge that you have learned to love Jesus, and to look up to heaven for your refreshment as you go through this weary world.

“I shall always love you, Hector, even more then than now; for then my love will be like the love of the pure angels, without one spot or stain of earth to make it less true or sweet. And I shall watch for you to come to me; I shall look to see if you are drawing daily nearer; and when you come, I shall run out to meet you—I shall be, Oh, so glad.”

She ceased, exhausted, and sank back upon her pillows; but the light that brightened her eyes was not of this world. She had been raised beyond herself as she spoke, up to the very

gates of the City. All her reserve and timidity seemed passed away, and in their place already divine love and joy were dawning.

A long time Hector remained upon his knees, thinking over all that she had said, and perhaps asking for himself that blessing which she craved for him so earnestly. Rising at last, he clasped her to his heart with one long, quivering sigh, as if some one were rending a part of his very life away from him ; then laying her down again, without a word he abruptly left the room.

A few quiet tears rolled down Rose's face ; but silently wiping them away, she begged Grace to continue reading, and Grace read all through the last records of our Saviour's death and glorious resurrection.

CHAPTER XIV.

“Cometh sunshine after rain,
After mourning, joy again ;
After heavy, bitter grief
Dawneth surely sweet relief.”

LYRA GERMANICA.

THE next day, as Hector, on his way to his tutor's, was passing farmer Barnes' house, he observed a figure which he thought he knew moving about in the garden. For some time, however, he could not remember where he had seen it before, until at length, as he walked on, it flashed upon him that it was that of Totty's aunt.

He had by no means forgotten his resolution to visit her, and as after his morning's work he was returning home to luncheon, he stopped at the farm-house, and for nearly half an hour was closeted with Mrs. Newbury. When he at last

entered the dining-room, luncheon was nearly over; his countenance bore an expression of mingled pain and satisfaction, and during the meal Julia remarked that he frequently raised his eyes from his plate, to turn them towards the window which faced the park.

General Courtenay had gone to his study, and was engaged in writing a letter, when the butler made his appearance, announcing that a person wished to speak with his master.

“Show the person in here then,” replied the general.

The butler withdrew, and returned in company with a stout middle-aged woman of homely appearance, whose countenance bore the evident marks of distress. She dropped a low courtesy as she entered, and her hand trembled perceptibly as, on the general's desiring her to sit down, she drew a chair towards her.

"I think I know your face," said the general, observing that she seemed to find some difficulty in introducing the object of her visit.

"Yes, sir," replied the woman, "I dare say you do. My name is Newbury, sir, Anne Newbury; and I'm the sister of John Barnes, who rents the little farm in your park."

"Oh indeed," said the general, his tone insensibly colder as the name of Barnes was mentioned.

"I've come to you on a very painful subject, sir," continued the woman nervously; "but Mr. Hector called to see me this morning, and—"

"Hector, my grandson?" exclaimed the general.

"Aye, sir. He wanted to ask me something about my niece. I think, sir, that a young lady, Miss Grace Courtenay, is staying with you now."

"She is."

"And, sir, if I may be bold enough to say such a thing, I believe she's out of favor with you on account of Totty, my niece."

The general had now assumed an attitude of deep attention; but he made no reply, and the woman continued:

"Well, sir, if you'll allow me, I think I can get that young lady out of trouble, though I'm afraid it will go far towards getting another young lady *in*; but justice must be done, as Mr. Hector said this morning; and, sir, I think I'd better make a clean breast of it, and tell you the whole story.

"Well, sir, about two months ago, I came to Aberford to see my brother; I stayed some time with him, and the twenty-fifth of October was the day that I went back to my home."

"The twenty-fifth of October," in-

wardly mused the general; "that, I remember, was the very day when I discovered Grace's deceit."

"It was somewhere between half after two and three o'clock, sir, that I was up in my bedroom, getting ready to go. The horse was just being put in the gig, and my box was locked and corded; and my brother, he was going with me to the station, and Totty was to stay at home the while and take care of the house. I was standing at the window, when what should I see but Totty below in the garden, a talking to a young lady over the palings.

"Thinks I to myself, 'Why, sure that's one of the general's young ladies,' for I'd often seen your family, sir, at church, or passing by in the park, and I wonders what might bring the young lady here, a talking to my niece; so, as the window were wide open, I looked out still keen-

er, and then I saw that it was Miss Julia."

"Miss Julia!" The general turned deadly pale, and grasped the arm of his chair, but made a motion to Mrs. Newbury to continue her narration.

"Yes, sir, it were Miss Julia, and I grieve to have to say it, both for my niece's sake and hers. I saw her face quite plain, and my niece took out a book and handed to her, and then she gave my niece some money from her purse, and says, 'Well, good-by, Totty;' and my niece says, 'Good-by, Miss Julia;' and off she shot like a twinkling.

"When my niece came in, I questioned her as to what she had been doing with Miss Courtenay; and she answered me quite pertly, as I'm sorry to say's her custom, 'Oh, Miss Julia often comes to pay me a visit; we're capital friends, we are.' So then I asked her about the

book and the money, and she colored up red, and muttered something that I didn't well take in. But just then my brother called me in a hurry, and said we should lose the train; so I was forced to go, though I thought there must be something wrong somewhere, and that I'd see to it when I came back to Aberford.

“Well, sir, this morning Mr. Hector come to the house, and asked to see me. I was surprised, as you may fancy; but I took him into the best parlor, and then he out with it, and told me all what had happened the very day I left. And he said he had reason to think my niece was playing Miss Grace foul; and could I enlighten him?”

The poor woman's tears flowed fast as she continued:

“Ah, sir, it's a hard thing to see a motherless bairn, and that your own kith

and kin too, as you 'd nursed upon your knee, turning out so bold and evil, and so ready in ways of lying and cunning. Yes, sir, it's a hard and grievous thing, but it's what I sees in Totty; and when I called her in this morning, and charged her with the truth before Mr. Hector, she laughed in my face. And seeing she could n't anyhow conceal it, she confessed to having told all them falsehoods, and got an innocent young lady into such trouble, as easy as she 'd confess to having eaten her dinner yesterday.

“ ‘But Miss Julia was as bad as me,’ she says, ‘for she came to see me against her grandpa’s word, because she wanted the second volume of a book as I’d got for her from the town library. She paid me for getting her books,’ she says, ‘and I’ve got her, on and off, more than a score. She used often to come and meet me in the park, and one day she brought

Miss Grace. But Miss Grace was too proud to come again, and that's one reason why I didn't count it much harm to spite her by telling the general it was her that he saw with me.'

"Well, sir, you must be tired of hearing me talk, so I'll just finish up my story as fast as I can. Mr. Hector asked me, sir, if I would oblige him by coming up here, and telling you all the truth. In course I couldn't refuse him, and this is why I have made bold to trouble you with a visit.

"When Mr. Hector was gone, I had a talk alone with Totty, and then she seemed more ashamed of herself, and I brought the tears to her eyes. I asked her, had Miss Julia and she agreed beforehand to accuse Miss Grace, if any question was made about the matter. She said, No; but after you had been to the farm, she had sent off the yard boy,

as is a very quick runner, with a note, to tell Miss Julia what she had done. She told him to look sharp, and see if he could get to the house before you, sir; and he being but a dull lad, and thoughtless into the bargain, never suspected any thing, but ran fast and delivered the note.

“And now, sir, I have nothing more to say, except to make you my humble apologies, and to tell you how grieved I am that any niece of mine should be mixed up with this business. My brother feels it sadly, sir; he'd never have thought it of Totty. But we've agreed now that I shall take her away to live with me for a few years, and get her out of her bad habits, if I can. And my eldest daughter, who's a young woman now, and very steady and prudent, is coming in Totty's place, to keep house for my brother. So, sir, you wont be

troubled with *her* no more, until, as I hope, by the blessing of God, she's grown a better girl."

The general heaved a deep sigh, almost a groan, and rose up from his seat.

"You have done quite right, Mrs. Newbury," he said in a hollow, subdued voice, "and I respect your frankness in coming to me at once with this clear and candid statement. I will ask you one question before you go. Do you remember whether the young lady whom you saw with your niece wore a veil?"

"A veil, sir? Yes, she did, for I recollect noticing it flapping about in the wind."

"Should you recognize it if you saw it now?"

"As likely as not, sir. I remember the color was brown."

The general rang the bell, and sent for Grace. She soon appeared, and he

desired her to bring the veil which he had found upon the tree.

Mrs. Newbury recognized it at once, in spite of its tattered condition; and thus the last proof of Grace's innocence was established.

The door had scarcely closed upon the woman when the general turned to Grace, whom he had prevented from quitting the room, and extended his arms towards her.

She, in mingled timidity and astonishment, glanced at his face. One look was sufficient to reassure her, and the next moment the general was holding her in an embrace which told of perfect reconciliation.

"Grace," he said huskily, "I doubt your innocence no longer. But you must forgive your old grandfather; he acted for the best."

Then, seating himself once more in



his arm-chair, and drawing her to stand beside him, he gave her a full account of all that had passed between himself and Mrs. Newbury.

“But you do not seem surprised, my child, at your cousin Julia’s behavior. As for me, it seems to have stunned me. I cannot yet believe it. Surely you knew nothing of it before.”

Grace colored and looked down; but as the general pressed her, and insisted upon her telling him all the truth, she confessed at length to having found the note in the school-room.

“And you destroyed it! You kept it to yourself all this time! Well, perhaps this was in itself wrong. Truth should not be concealed, and dissimulation is to be shunned. But yet you are a noble-minded girl. How strange that you were able to persist in such conduct for so long a time. But,” continued the general

sadly, "why is there such a difference? Why is not Julia like you? I have endeavored, I have done my best to bring her up as she should be. But I suppose I have not the capability."

He bowed his head upon his hands for some moments, and was lost in sorrowful thought. Ah, he was experiencing now something of the dryness and weariness of spirit which results from putting our full trust in earthly means, and forgetting the Lord our God. His constant object being to draw us nearer to himself, he will not bless nor cause to prosper that which we do in any strength but his. He will have us in all our ways to acknowledge him, and he then will direct our paths.

"Grace, my child," said the general, raising his head at last, "it shall now be my constant care to indemnify you for all the suffering of the last six weeks.

They are over and gone, I am thankful to say ; and it only remains for me to make you forget them."

The general dismissed Grace, and called for Julia. She came ; and as one look had served to assure Grace of her restoration to favor, so one look was enough to convince Julia that all was at last discovered. Overcome with shame and fear, she stood half-bent and silent, feeling as though she should never dare to lift up her head again. She ventured not one word in her own defence, as the general set all that she had done before her ; only, when he told her that Grace had the whole time been aware of her guilt, she burst into a passion of tears.

The general did not detain her long ; he said no angry word to her, he seemed too sick at heart for that. He merely ordered her to her own apartment, and told her that he should wish her to re-

main there until he had resolved on the best course to pursue. She crept towards the door, not daring to speak; and as she reached it, the general said, in a voice more bitter to her than any reproach could be, "Julia, rather than that you should have acted so, I would that you were lying now where your sister is—upon the bed of death."

These words still sounding in her ears, Julia retreated to her room.



CHAPTER XV.

“First seek thy Saviour out, and dwell
Under the shadow of his roof,
Till thou have scanned his features well,
And known him for the Christ by proof :
“Such proof as they are sure to find,
Who spend with him their willing days,
Clean hands, and a self-ruling mind,
Ever in tune for prayer and praise.
“*Then*, potent with the spell of heaven,
Go, and thine erring brother gain ;
Entice him home to be forgiven,
Till he too see his Saviour plain.”

KEBLE.

THE general speedily resolved upon his plan of action. Ordering his horse, he started at once for the house of a friend who was in want of a governess, taking with him the testimonials which he had received in favor of the lady already engaged for Julia. On returning home, he wrote a letter for the post, and then once more summoning Julia, he told

her that his decision was formed. He had written to a lady, a clergyman's wife, of whom he had heard much praise, and who took a few young girls to educate with her own daughters. He had asked this lady, aware that she had lately lost a pupil, to receive Julia at once into her establishment. The governess whom he had already engaged he had strongly recommended to another person, and thus she would not be disappointed in her hope of a situation. Until the clergyman's wife was able to receive Julia, she was to live entirely between her own room and the school-room, apart from the rest of the family.

Julia heard her sentence without daring to remonstrate; but as her grandfather finished speaking she ventured to creep somewhat nearer to him, and to murmur, "Grandpapa, will you forgive me?"

"I have forgiven you already, Julia," replied General Courtenay, "but it will be long before you can recover your place in my confidence and esteem."

Julia stood still for a few minutes; then finding that nothing more was said to her, she slowly left the room.

She went up stairs, and throwing herself upon her bed, buried her face in the pillows, and resigned herself to her misery. It seemed to her then that she could never again be happy.

Presently she heard a light footstep enter the room and approach the bed. The next moment Grace's arm was round her, and her voice was asking her to look up, to try and not be so wretched.

For some time Julia took no notice of her cousin, but at last she said, in a smothered tone, "Oh, Grace, don't speak to me. I do n't deserve it. You, whom

I have treated so, can *you* be so kind to me?"

"Dear Julia, please do not say that ; only look up and do not cry so much. You will make yourself quite ill."

Julia raised herself into a sitting posture. Her eyes were swollen and red with weeping, her cheeks were flushed, and her thick black hair was falling in disorder over her face.

"Oh, Grace," she cried, "and you knew it all the time. You knew what I had done all those long weeks when grand-papa was so angry with you. And you never spoke of it, you never even mentioned it to me. You bore every thing so patiently, and never answered me when I was cross to you. I don't know any one else who could have behaved as you have. Grace, I have sometimes laughed at you for being so religious. I have thought it cant, and even hypocri-

sy ; but now, now I see differently. You have made me love you and wish to be religious. It must be something very great and true and noble which could enable you to act as you have acted. Oh, Grace, I wish you would teach it to me."

"Jesus can teach you, dear Julia," said Grace. "Pray to him, and ask him to teach you, and I am sure he will."

"But I dare not now," said Julia, "now when I have been so wicked."

"That is one chief reason why you should," replied Grace. "If you will only ask him, he will take all your sins away. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.' Those are the words of Scripture. Ask him by the power of the Spirit to convince you increasingly of your sinfulness, and beg for that pardon which he gives through the shedding of his precious blood."

“I cannot ask him. I don't know how,” said Julia. “Grace, will you ask him for me?”

“Do you mean at once?” asked Grace ; and on Julia answering in the affirmative, the two girls knelt down together, and Grace, in a few simple, but earnest words, commended her cousin to the Lord.

As they rose from their knees, Julia threw her arms around Grace, and with many tears implored her forgiveness. Grace assured her that this had been long ago accorded her. She stayed a short time, further endeavoring to soothe her ; and then finding that her cousin was growing more composed, she left her alone.

Grace could scarcely believe that her trouble was really ended ; that her innocence was brought to light, and herself once more installed in her grandfa-

ther's favor. The time of her trial, now that she could look back upon it, seemed like a short, painful dream; but she felt that it had been wonderfully blessed and overruled for good. Had not this suspicion fallen upon her, Julia might never have been brought to seek the privilege of being a child of God, nor to long after Him who ever waits to pardon and bless all contrite hearts.

And some results Grace's trial had which she herself did not see. The grief and desolation through which she had passed had acted upon her like a refining fire, helping to purify and ennoble her soul, and to draw it nearer heaven. She had learned now, for herself, how vain and mutable is our short, human life; how quickly in this fleeting world we may pass from joy to grief; how easily, sometimes by no fault of our own,

our reputations may fall ; how, in short, the only sure rest for our souls is that which is founded in God through Christ Jesus.

And now Grace prayed that she might cling to him more closely than she had ever done before ; and she asked that in her joy, as in her sorrow, she might still be found striving to make each event that befell her a help in the way which leads at last to his presence.

The dying bed of Rose was softened by the thought that her beloved Grace was once more happy. She wept when she heard of Julia's evil conduct ; but soon, looking up, smiled through her tears. "I had almost forgotten Jesus. I must tell him all about it. He will forgive Julia, and make her good."

And in that sweet confidence the child rested, feeling content to leave this trouble, as she felt content to leave

every trouble now, in the hands of her Saviour.

Hector's delight and admiration, when he heard of Grace's conduct respecting the note, was unbounded; but, as his fashion was, he kept his feelings very much to himself, only talking the matter over with Rose, and agreeing that it was exactly what they might have expected from Grace; and as with Julia, so with Hector, arose the involuntary thought, "Religion in the heart must be a noble thing to have such noble results."

Thus Grace's earnest wish, her fervent prayer, to work for Jesus among her cousins at Aberford, were abundantly granted her, although in a way which she knew not, a way which she herself would not have chosen had it been left to her choice.

But who can fathom the mind of the Lord? Who can understand his ways?

Truly they “are in the sea, his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.”

Only let us be sure they all tend in one direction—to the glory of his name, and the salvation of his people.



CHAPTER XVI.

“Mount up, immortal essence ;
Young spirit, haste, depart!
And is this death? Dread thing,
If such thy visiting,
How beautiful thou art.”

CAROLINE BOWLES.

THE doctors had wondered that the little life had lingered on so long ; but it was fading now and sinking fast, as all they who watched it saw. Christmas was drawing near, but it seemed not like Christmas time to them. They only remembered, when they thought of the season, that the passing out of the year was at hand.

General Courtenay had, some months before, written to his son in India, and had told him that, if he did not come to England quickly, he feared he would run small chance of seeing Rose again.

But the Sepoy mutiny was just then raging, and Colonel Courtenay could not leave his post. Blotted and stained by a soldier's tears came a farewell note to his little daughter; but this was all that he could send her, and this was the last that Rose heard of her father.

Alfred had returned for his holidays, and the whole family were gathered together and waiting for the messenger of death who was coming to take one of them away.

It seemed to them, as they stood round her bed, that Rose had never before been half so dear. It seemed to them that all the past events of her life, the little reminiscences of her infancy and childhood, stood out as clearly before their eyes as though they had happened only yesterday.

They thought of all her playful little tricks, her winning, baby ways, her sun-

ny smile. They thought of her, rosy, healthy, happy, as they had seen her many times, running to and fro in her play. They thought of her, each one for himself, each one with some fresh remembrance, each one recalling the days when to look at her had been to banish any idea of death.

So it must ever be. You who have seen the same, you who have watched the waning of a life that once was dear to you, you can tell how sorrowfully, how regretfully such reminiscences sprang up as your task grew daily shorter. And if faith in the Lord Jesus has given you that sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection which death itself cannot take away, how sweet it is to look up and on, and to almost realize that land where sin and sorrow have no dominion.

It was Christmas eve; no snow had

fallen as yet, and the glorious stars shone bright and clear in the frosty sky. The Christmas bells were ringing in the distance with a kind of mournful sweetness, and Rose lay back among her pillows and heard them dimly as in some far off dream.

All earthly sounds, all earthly sights were growing dim to her now. Her bodily senses were failing, for it was near the time when her spirit should need them no more.

She lay and heard the bells ring on until the midnight hour was past; then striving to raise herself, she called Ferrers to her side, and asked her if she would be so kind as to rouse the others, for she would like to wish them good-by.

Ferrers hastened to do her bidding, and soon all were quickly aroused from slumber and assembled around the bed.

The general went up to the pillow and

stood beside it; Grace next him; and Alfred, with Julia, who knew that she would not be banished from *that* room, stood in frightened awe at the foot of the bed. Hector alone stood aloof leaning against the mantel-piece, his face hidden in his hand, as if he could not bear to look up.

“Grandpapa,” said Rose, “I am very sorry to disturb you, but I am afraid to put off saying good-by any longer. Will you put your arms round me and kiss me, for I cannot raise my head.”

The general bent down and held her for several minutes clasped in a long embrace. She was too weak to talk much, but in a few words she thanked him for all his kindness to her, all his care.

“Good-by, dear grandpapa,” she said; “I shall see you again; I have asked Jesus.”

And then the general, weeping like a

child, laid her down again, and retired to the other side of the bed.

Alfred came next, then Julia ; to each she said a few tender words of farewell, and each she assured that she should see them again, for she had asked it of Jesus.

Then Grace approached, and Rose held her tight, as if she would never let her go.

“Blessed Grace,” she said, “it is you who have taught me, you who have shown me this happy way to die. I shall tell Jesus in a few hours—I shall tell him all that you have done.”

Grace's tears fell fast, but Rose's eyes were dry as the two friends severed each other's arms, to be joined no more in this world. Then, instead of asking for Hector, she called Ferrers, and bade farewell to her, thanking her affectionately for all her nursing ; and then she asked if any of the servants were there,

and such as answered the call she shook hands with, and begged them to ask Jesus to let them meet her again.

She lay silent for a short time after this, for she was much exhausted; but soon rallying again, she looked up and asked for Hector. Mechanically he raised his head and came to the bedside, and as Rose saw him, the flickering flame of life seemed for an instant to revive.

“Hector, my beloved, come to me, close here, and take me in your arms. Lay my head upon your breast; yes, so. Is it comfortable to you? Then this is how I will die.”

There was silence in the room for half an hour after that, until Rose asked in a voice still weaker than before, “Will any one pray?” and then added, “Grand-papa, please.”

The general got a prayer-book, and

opening it, read the first collect he met with. It was that for Ascension-day.

“Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.”

He then went on to the commendatory prayer; and then, feeling that his voice was breaking, pronounced the benediction:

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.”

The general ceased, but they still remained kneeling around the bed. A deep silence, a hallowed stillness fell

upon all the room, and so for hours they stayed with little change, while the childish life was fast ebbing away.

Who can tell what beauteous sights she saw as the mortal veil was thus rolling from before her eyes? Who can tell what sounds from the far off land made melody to her in that darkened chamber, which to all the rest was so still?

The dawn was breaking in the east, the dawn of Christmas morning, and the sky beneath which the shepherds long ago watched was streaked with crimson lines. Suddenly, below the windows, the village waits struck up a Christmas carol. Their simple voices, joining in harmony, sounded sweetly in the early morning, and the general stopped Ferrers as she was moving towards the door with the intent to send them away.

"Don't," he said; "she likes it," and he pointed towards the bed.

Rose was lying with one hand slightly raised, her ear inclined in the attitude of rapt attention ; and the carol-singers were left undisturbed as they united in the old Christmas hymn :

“ Christians, awake, salute the happy morn
Whereon the Saviour of mankind was born ;
Rise to adore the mystery of love,
Which hosts of angels chanted from above :
With them the joyful tidings first begun,
Of God incarnate, and the Virgin's Son.

“ Then to the watchful shepherds it was told,
Who heard th' angelic herald's voice, ‘ Behold,
I bring good tidings of a Saviour's birth,
To you, and all the nations upon earth :
This day hath God fulfilled his promised word,
This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.’

“ He spoke ; and straightway the celestial choir
In hymns of joy unknown before conspire ;
The praises of redeeming love they sang,
And heaven's whole orb with hallelujahs rang ;
God's highest glory was their anthem still,
Peace upon earth, and unto men good-will.

“ To Bethlehem straight th' enlightened shepherds ran,
To see the wonders God had wrought for man ;
Then to their flocks, still praising God, return,
And their glad hearts within their bosoms burn :
To all the joyful tidings they proclaim,
The first apostles of the Saviour's fame.

“Oh, may we keep and ponder in our mind
God’s wondrous love in saving lost mankind :
Trace we the Babe who hath retrieved our loss,
From his poor manger to his bitter cross ;
Tread in his steps, assisted by his grace,
Till man’s first heavenly state again takes place.”

What sudden light was this breaking
forth upon the sick child’s countenance ?
What sudden ray illumined the eyes on
which death’s dimness had been gathering ? They beheld it amazed, but no
one spoke. Then came the last verse :

“Then may we hope, th’ angelic hosts among,
To join redeemed a glad triumphant throng :
He that was born upon this joyful day,
Around us all his glory shall display ;
Saved by his love, incessant we shall sing
Eternal praise to heaven’s almighty King.”

They saw that light die out and pass
away ; they saw the eyes close wearily.
They saw the head, like a tired child’s,
fall back more heavily on Hector’s
shoulder. More than this they could
not see ; they could not follow beyond

the bounds of mortality: but as the Christmas waits, leaving the house, retreated down the avenue, still singing, they knew that fairer music was breaking now upon the ears of that happy spirit.



CHAPTER XVII.

“Went ye not forth with prayer?
Then ye went not forth in vain;
‘The Sower, the Son of man,’ was *there*,
And his was that precious grain.
“And the harvest-home ye’ll keep,
The summer of life ye’ll share,
When they that sow and they that reap
Rejoice together *there*.”

Author of the “Three Wakings.”

THE January snows lay white on Rose’s grave when, one morning early, Grace stood at the school-room window, waiting for the carriage which was to take her away from Aberford. Her aunt in Paris was almost well; her mother had been in England more than a week; and she was to travel with the general and Julia, who, on their way to the establishment where the latter was to be placed, would pass the post-town of Grace’s home.

To that home she could not but be very glad to be returning. Her heart could not but bound at the thought that the months of separation from her mother were at an end ; but, as is almost always the case in this life, her pleasure was mingled with pain. She had grown very fond of Aberford and its inmates, and was grieved that she must now part from them.

These varied emotions were chasing one another through her mind, when suddenly the school-room door opened, and Hector entered. He was altered in many ways since Rose's death ; he had become pale and thin ; his manner also was more subdued, and his temper far less irritable. He and his grandfather were on much better terms than before ; they began now to understand each other. The general was touched by the sight of the grief which Hector vainly

strove to repress. He made the discovery that Hector's heart was in the right place after all ; and Hector, always influenced by gentleness and affection, was very grateful for his grandfather's sympathy.

He now came up to Grace, as she stood beside the window, carrying in his hand a little gold locket.

"Grace," he said, "will you accept this from me, as a small remembrance of—" He hurried over his sentence, he could not as yet bear to utter that name.

"I have some of her hair placed inside. I thought you would like it, and you were so kind to her. I can never forget that."

Grace took the locket, and strove to thank him ; but she was unable to speak, and Hector went on, "I am very sorry you are going ; I wish you could write to me sometimes. You know so much

better than I the way to that place where *she* has gone. I think if I could only get there—to her—”

His voice broke down; he stopped and passed his sleeve across his eyes to brush away the hot tears that would have vent. But just then the carriage wheels were heard, and Hector held out his hand.

“I suppose I must say good-by to you now,” he said in his usual manner; “I hope I shall not be at college when next you come here. You have done me good, Grace, in many ways. Will you ask your mother if you may write?”

Grace promised, and then in a lower tone she added, “When I pray, I shall often ask our Saviour to comfort and bless you, and that one day he will unite you with Rose in his own home for ever.”

Hector pressed her hand again, with an earnest “Thank you,” and Grace ran

down into the hall, where the general, Julia, and Alfred were already assembled. A few moments, and the carriage was driving swiftly through the park.

It is always a good plan, on saying farewell to a place, to ask ourselves what good we have gained, and what good we have imparted, since we entered it; to search our hearts and see whether we have drawn nearer heaven, or the reverse; and whether we are leaving those behind us in any way wiser or happier than when we found them.

Had Grace asked herself this question, she would have obtained a satisfactory answer. She was better able now than when she left home to battle with temptation, and to endure trouble and trial. She had learned to lean more upon the arm of her Saviour; she knew more of his supporting power.

And not only this, but she had been

enabled to become a help and a blessing to those from whom she was parting. Even her grandfather felt that her conduct had impressed him, as he had never been impressed before, with the reality of "things not seen as yet." The good that she had done to Hector would be an abiding good; and Julia's altered countenance already showed that she too, in deep repentance, was beginning to follow her cousin as she followed Christ.

And there was one who had passed beyond earth now, beyond the weariness, the turmoil, and the strife; one who would some day shine as a star in her crown for ever; one to whom Jesus seemed specially to have sent her as a messenger for him of that light which cheers the dreary valley of death; and that one, more than any of the others, had cause to bless Grace.

The carriage rolled slowly past the

church, for it was built upon a hill, and Grace, leaning out, could see in the churchyard the tombstone that marked Rose's grave. She had not been buried in the family vault, for she had begged that it might be otherwise ; and so, with only the green grass over her, and heaven's own heights above, her weary body lay in its last long sleep, resting sweetly, to wake no more until the coming of the Lord.

Just so may all who read this little volume rest. Like Grace, may they make it their chief aim, in Jesus, "to glorify God," that so at last among the blood-bought throng, like Rose, they may "enjoy him for ever."

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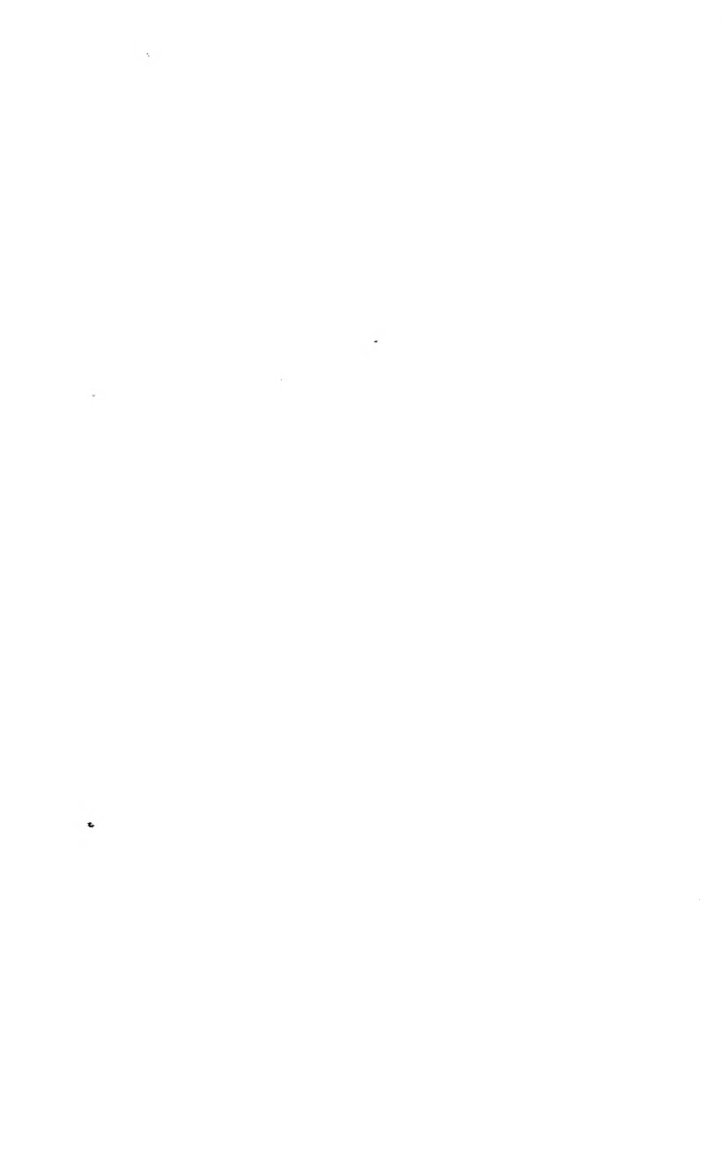
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